

LIVE CHRIST, SHARE CHRIST

*A Lay Response to the Call to
the New Evangelization*

LIFE IN CHRIST SEMINAR

*An Initiations Course for
Mainstreaming Catholic Lay Evangelization*

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L 1 - INTRODUCTION

The world is hurtling toward global disaster. Wars. Famine. Massacre of the unborn. Destruction of the family. Economic collapse. Environmental disaster. Demographic winter. Global terrorism. Threat of nuclear war. Assault on religious freedom. Satan and his demons are rampaging throughout the face of the earth. A tsunami of evil is overwhelming the entire world.

Is there hope?

The world has turned away from God. Even many Christians have turned away from authentic faith. The Church that Jesus Christ established is being assaulted from every side, and even from within. Modernism. Liberalism. Dissent. Pro-choice. Assault on faith. Clergy sexual abuse. Disunity. Wolves among the sheep.

Only God can make things right. God has His wonderful plans not for woe but for a future full of hope. Jesus has already won our salvation and brought restoration to the Kingdom. The Holy Spirit dispenses bountiful grace and empowers the Church to bring hope and peace to a darkened world.

But the struggle in the world continues. The forces of evil wage war against God and His Church. This struggle will be until the end of time, until Jesus returns in glory. In the meantime, God entrusts His work to us His people, with the assurance that He will be with us to the end. We need to respond. We need to stand and be counted. We need to become God's co-workers.

This is the call to the New Evangelization.

While there can be various ways of responding to the call, one particular response is the Live Christ, Share Christ (LCSC) Movement. This manual focuses on a particular methodology of LCSC, which is a seminar called a Life in Christ Seminar (LCS). It is intended for Catholics to meet Christ, live Christ and share Christ. It is designed for rapid and massive evangelization, accompanied by the systematic empowerment of laypeople to participate in the work, based in parishes.

It is hoped that through the Live Christ, Share Christ (LCSC) movement, the Church will be able to mainstream Catholic lay Evangelization that will work for renewal and revival in the Catholic Church.

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L 2 - THE LIFE IN CHRIST SEMINAR

The LCS is an integrated course intended to lead seminar participants into a renewed understanding of God's call to them as Catholics. It comprises a total of 9 separate sessions. The sessions have basic ingredients: prayers, a teaching, a group discussion.

The LCS has one basic purpose: bringing participants to a personal relationship with Jesus, and getting them started on living a truly Spirit-filled Christian life. It is about transformation in Christ and renewal in the Spirit. It is about bringing nominal or lapsed Catholics back to God and back to the Church.

What is the content of the LCS?

The LCS is divided into 3 modules of 3 sessions each. The topics of the 9 sessions are as follows:

Module #1: MEETING CHRIST

- 1) The Love of God
- 2) The Grace of Jesus
- 3) The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit

Module #2: LIVING CHRIST

- 4) Repentance and Faith
- 5) Loving God
- 6) Loving Neighbor

Module #3: SHARING CHRIST

- 7) Empowered by the Spirit
- 8) Growing in the Spirit
- 9) The Live Christ, Share Christ Movement

What is each module and talk about?

The first module, entitled "Meeting Christ," is about meeting and knowing God. The foundation of our relationship with God is His love for us, manifested in sending His very own Son Jesus to suffer and die for us. Jesus the Son is our Savior and Lord. As he has ascended to heaven, he sent his Spirit to be our guide and to empower us to proclaim the good news of salvation in him.

The Love of God speaks about God's wanting to bring us out of the confusion and disorder that is being experienced in the modern world, and to bring us all back to Himself, to restore our fellowship and intimacy with Him. There is something seriously wrong with the situation in the world today, and behind most of the disorder and evil is Satan. Only God can bring us out of this, and He has done it by sending His own Son Jesus into the world to suffer and die for us. In Jesus we have our salvation.

The Grace of Jesus is about the second Person of the Trinity, the God who became man. Jesus is not just a great man or a great religious leader, but he is actually God. As Jesus himself claimed to be God, he is either a liar, a lunatic or indeed the Lord.

The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit is about the third Person of the Trinity, who was sent by Jesus to empower us to live our lives according to God's plan. The Holy Spirit provides the power from above that enables us to live a normal Christian life. True Christian living is not just a matter of human willpower but a new heart, a new life from God. The Holy Spirit enables us to experience God, a living relationship with Him, and His action in our lives. With the Holy Spirit, we again experience union with God and gain a new nature, spiritual power, and the power to serve.

Having met Christ, we need to live our life in him. The second module, entitled "Living Christ," is about living the life that God intends for all who profess to follow Jesus. It starts with our turning away from our old lives. Then we need to live the way of God, summed up in the two greatest commandments of love of God and love of neighbor.

Repentance and Faith is the proper response of one who has known God's love, who accepts Jesus as Lord, and who desires to live a life in the Spirit. Repentance and faith is a double-action response that goes together. Repentance involves a turning away from sin, wrongdoing and running our own lives, and a turning to a life of obedience to God. Faith, in turn, is belief in Jesus as our personal Savior.

Loving God is the first and greatest commandment. This talk explains in detail what it really means to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. To truly love God is a high ideal, and Jesus himself is our model.

Loving Neighbor, together with loving God, forms the core of the Christian life. The talk contrasts God's love with the world's idea of love. Love is not only having positive feelings, not always saying "yes," not defensive, not self-seeking or manipulative. Rather, Christian love is connected with keeping God's commandments and means a self-sacrificial love, best exemplified by Jesus himself. On the practical level, Christian love means committed service to our fellow men.

An important part of living Christ is to share Christ, that is, to proclaim the good news of salvation in Jesus to others. True disciples of Jesus ought to become evangelizers. The third and final module, entitled "Sharing Christ," helps participants to become a part of the evangelizing mission of the Church.

Empowered by the Spirit is essentially a prayer session where the participants are prayed with for a renewed infilling of the Holy Spirit in their lives, to enable them to manifest a renewed outpouring of the same Spirit for the life of the world. This is the "baptism in the Holy Spirit." This is essential to become true witnesses to Christ and to be able to boldly proclaim the gospel. This introduces participants to evangelistic spirituality.

Growing in the Spirit teaches the five tools to growing in the Christian life. These are prayer, study, service, fellowship and the sacraments. This paves the way for people to become witnesses who can credibly share the gospel.

The Live Christ, Share Christ Movement brings everything together in a parish-based movement committed to bring Catholics back to God and to the Church, through the ongoing process of meeting Christ, living Christ, and sharing Christ. As the LCS is just the start of our life-long walk with Jesus, we look to ongoing transformation in Christ. Though the LCS has come to an end, the new life in Christ is just beginning. In order to grow, much more is needed—learning more about the Christian life, the strength and support of others, having an environment where one can serve God, being leaven in the parish, proclaiming the good news to others. The participants are invited to continue their journey, and they make a commitment to the Live Christ, Share Christ movement through a covenant.

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L 3 - EXPANDED LCS TALK OUTLINES

OPENING REMARKS

The Roman Catholic Church has issued the call to the New Evangelization. Pope John Paul II desired “to undertake the Church’s evangelizing mission with renewed enthusiasm.” Pope Benedict XVI stressed its new character, given the social and cultural changes in the world today and the widespread de-Christianization of baptized Christians. The Church looks “to devise new tools and new expressions to ensure that the word of faith be heard more and be better understood, even in the new deserts of this world.”

Europe has become such a desert. The secularized Western world is such a desert. All the nations of the world are under threat by this continuing desertification.

The reality is that few Catholics actually truly live out their Christian faith. Many do not go to Sunday Mass. Many go but do all sorts of sinful things outside of the Church. For those who do good, many do not go deeper in their faith life.

As such, the Church is ill-equipped to attain to its God-given destiny to be light and leaven in the world, much less to be effective witnesses to the gospel. On top of this, there are the anti-family and anti-life forces promoting the culture of death that are overwhelming the world. Many dissident Catholics are supportive of reproductive health (RH) and even divorce and same-sex marriage. We are being swamped by this tsunami of evil. Even further, Catholics are being lost at an alarming rate to sects and fundamentalists, all antagonistic to the Catholic Church.

Thus there is a dire need to re-evangelize Catholics. Catholics need to meet Christ, live Christ, and share Christ.

Many Catholics, even those who go to Church regularly, do not really know Jesus. They do not have a personal relationship with him. They have not experienced the transforming power of his Spirit.

Many who may know Jesus have not gone deeper in their relationship with him. They are not living Christ. They are unaware of the call to true discipleship, to holiness, to Christian perfection.

And most lay Catholics do not share Christ, that is, they do not evangelize others so that these might meet Christ and start to live Christ. They are not aware that every Christian is supposed to be an evangelizer. Thus, even for a good Catholic, if he does not share Christ, then he becomes the most selfish of people.

This LCS is intended to bring many more Catholics to meet Christ, live Christ and share Christ. This is the true Christian life.

Join us now for an exciting journey, as we move together proclaiming Christ to the world.

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L 3 - SESSION No. 1: THE LOVE OF GOD

Goal: To know the truth that God loves us and has a plan for our welfare.

Expanded Outline:

A. The situation in the world today.

1. There is serious disorder in the world today.
 - a) There is war (cite some of the current wars going on).
 - b) There is poverty.
 - * Starvation in different parts of the world.
 - * Poor people even in rich countries.
 - c) There is murder.
 - * Particularly despicable is abortion, resulting in the killing of millions of unborn children.
 - d) There is social injustice.
2. On a personal level, there is loneliness, depression, fear, insecurity, mistrust, etc.
3. Everyone agrees that something major is needed to correct the situation in the world.
 - a) Man has made various efforts to improve the world, but their efforts are not succeeding. For example:
 - * In the field of medicine, through the ultrasound technique, we can discover the sex of a child before it is born. But some people decide to kill the unborn child if found defective, or if it is not the desired sex.
 - Man cannot be completely trusted to use God's wisdom properly.
 - * In food production, we have learned better and more productive ways of increasing the yield of the land. But millions of people are still dying of malnutrition and starvation.
 - The human race has not learned to share God's provision with their less fortunate members.
 - b) Man is not succeeding because all these efforts are based on man's wisdom.
 - * What is needed is God's wisdom and ways. Is 55:8-9.

B. What is the way of God? Does God have a plan for bringing us out of our confusion and disorder?

1. Yes! The starting point for understanding God's plan is found in the story of creation in Genesis.
 - a) Gen 1:31. What God creates is good.
 - * The confusion and disorder is not in accordance with the plan of God.
 - b) Gen 1:27. God created man in His image.
 - * The ugliness and sin in the lives of people today are not in accordance with God's will.
 - c) Gen 3:8-9. Man is meant for friendship with God.

- * The disruption in our relationship with God is our doing, and is not as God intends.
2. Things did not turn out according to God's plan. Original sin entered the picture. And from then, man continued to turn against God and His ways.
 3. But still, even if God punished man, God did not abandon him.
 - a) God punished Adam and Eve when they sinned, yet God extended to them a gesture of grace: He gave them clothing (Gen 3:21) and even promised that the offspring of the woman will crush the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15).
 - * The woman is Mama Mary and the offspring is Jesus.
 - b) God punished Cain for murdering his brother Abel, yet He gave Cain a mark to protect him from being killed on sight (Gen 4:15).
 - c) Further on in Genesis (Gen 6ff), we read about the wickedness of man in the time of Noah. God sent a flood to eradicate evil on earth, yet He had compassion. He directed Noah to build an ark that would deliver the righteous from death.
 - d) Still further in Genesis (Gen 11:1-9), the wickedness of man continued to provoke the wrath of God, illustrated by the building of the tower of Babel.
 4. But this incident of the tower of Babel is immediately followed by the story of Abram (Abraham) (Gen 12), which is the beginning of the great restoration that Jesus was to bring.
 5. From these accounts, we can see how God loves the human race. God would not leave man alone to his deserved fate.
 - a) God is neither indifferent nor distant. God is someone who loves us and is interested in having a personal relationship with us. He is interested in the details of our daily lives.
 - * Is 48:17. Jer 29:11.
 - b) In fact, God wants to bring us all back to Himself, to restore our fellowship and intimacy with him. Eph 1:9-10.
 - c) This is God's plan! It is an expression of His love.
 - * God does not want us to live lives of pain, poverty or injustice. God wants the world to be a place of peace, justice and happiness. A place in which He would reign!

C. How can God's plan happen?

1. When we look at the world around us, it seems impossible.
2. Again, we need to turn to God's wisdom. We need God's point of view. What does God say about life's realities?
 - a) The Bible tells us about the reality of Satan. Eph 6:12.
 - * We are not just confronted with particular wrongs in society or in ourselves. Behind all these is something bigger. Satan is orchestrating these evils.
 - * On our own, we cannot overcome Satan.

- b) God also says that our human efforts apart from Him will prove useless. Jn 15:5.
 - * On our own strength, we cannot overcome the challenges in our Christian life.
 - 3. So what is the solution? Jesus Christ!
 - a) Christ is the answer.
 - * He is a spiritual being more powerful than Satan.
 - * He is the vine from which we draw life, strength and power.
 - C. In fact, Christ is the fullness of God's love. Jn 3:16.
 - * When you are tempted to doubt God's love, just look at the crucifix and see Jesus hanging on the cross.
 - 4. Thus, in Jesus we experience the love of God. And in Jesus, God's plan for restoration can begin to happen.
- D. What do we need to do?
- 1. We need to simply accept Jesus as Savior and Lord. Rom 10:9.
 - a) What this means will become clearer as we move on in this LCS.
 - b) But for now, what is important to know is simply this:
 - * God loves us.
 - * God sent Jesus His own Son.
 - * In Jesus we are saved and restored to our relationship with God, with the fullness of life He intended.
 - 2. So God has done His part. It is now our move.
 - a) The choice is ours: to live under the dominion of darkness, a life of slavery under Satan, or to live in the kingdom of God, a life of freedom, dignity, peace and happiness.
 - b) Let us accept Jesus and the salvation that he brings. Let us begin to truly experience the love of God.

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L 3 - SESSION No. 2: THE GRACE OF JESUS

Goal: To meet Jesus and accept him as Lord.

Expanded Outline

A. Introduction.

1. In the last talk, we saw that Jesus is the manifestation of God's love.
2. As Christians, we derive our identity from a person, one whom we can be truly proud of. He is truly impressive.
 - a) Billions today claim to be his followers, 2,000 years after his death.
 - b) Countless numbers have been martyred for their faith in him.
 - c) The book about him, the Bible, is easily the No. 1 best seller of all time.
3. It is this person who won for us our salvation, who restored us to our relationship with God. In him we can have a full and a new life.
4. Thus, realizing the importance of this person to us, we want to meet him and know him more. And so we ask: "Who is Jesus?"

B. The uniqueness of Jesus.

1. Having been born and raised as Catholics, we take for granted our conviction that Jesus is the Son of God. But this was not so for his contemporaries. They found it hard to accept that he was not just an ordinary person (Mk 6:3).
2. What we want to know is whether there is any reason not to put Jesus on the same level as Buddha, Confucius, Lao-Tze, Socrates or other wise men. Was Jesus more than just a great religious man or moral teacher?
 - a) History is full of men who have claimed that they came from God, or that they were gods, or that they bore messages from God. Even the person who this very day founded a new religion.
 - b) How is Jesus different from them all?
3. Three things make Jesus an absolutely unique figure in human history.
 - a) He was pre-announced and his coming was expected. Because of Old Testament prophecies, people for a long time were waiting for the messiah, which saw its fulfillment in Jesus.
 - b) Once he appeared on the scene, he struck history with such impact that he split it in two, dividing it into two periods: BC and AD.
 - c) Every other person who came into this world came into it to live. Jesus came into the world to die. His death was the goal and fulfillment of his life.

C. Some details about his life.

1. Jesus was a young carpenter in Nazareth. For three years he became an itinerant preacher. He was never more than 100 miles from his home. He had never been into cities with a population larger than 50,000.
 - a) Within 3 years he was dead, killed in little Jerusalem on the fringes of the Roman empire. He was crucified for stirring up the people.
 - b) By right he should simply have faded into complete oblivion. Instead, he is surely the most famous, honored, and best-loved person who ever walked the earth.

2. What was he like?
 - a) A very attractive personality. Warm, personal, dynamic. A major attraction of the times. People are constantly amazed at his teaching and works. Mk 9:15.
 - b) Strong in mind and body. He outwitted the leaders of his day in discussion as a boy of twelve, and later as a man who did not have their educational advantages. He was able to fast for 40 days.
 - c) Down-to-earth. Not a romantic or a dreamer. Courageous.
 - d) A magnetic leader. He summoned Simon and Andrew (Mk 1: 16-18), James and John (Mk 1:20), and Levi (Mk 2:14), who all followed him immediately.
 - e) A man of extraordinary authority.
 - * He broke long-standing traditions for the sake of a higher righteousness.
 - * He healed the disabled and the sick.
 - * He gave orders to nature that were obeyed.
 - f) Not confused or unsure of himself or of his mission.
 - * He resisted the desire of his followers to make him a political king.
 - * He rebuked Peter for standing in the way of his fulfilling the mission given by the Father. Mt 16:21-23.
 - g) Very human.
 - * He showed tenderness and personal concern.
 - * He experienced anger and grief (Mk 3:5), love (Mk 10:21), pity (Mk 1:41), sorrow (Mk 14:34).
 - * He even had his favorite time, which was early morning.

D. Jesus' claim to be God.

1. Jesus is totally unique from any other personality and so is clearly worth knowing. But is there more to him?
 - a) Is Jesus worthy to be the center of my life?
 - b) The answer is yes. There is something more to Jesus than to any other person. He is worth paying more attention to than any other man. BECAUSE HE IS GOD.

2. How do we know he is God?
 - a) By his miracles? Miracles only show that God is working through a person. A man could work miracles and not be God. Jn 14:12.
 - b) So how do we know? The answer simply is that Jesus himself told us so.

3. Time and again throughout his public ministry, Jesus claimed to be God.

- a) Mk 14:61-62.
- b) In John, Jesus time and again speaks of his divinity. Jn 12:45, 10:30, 8:58.

4. Jesus' claim to divinity is a far different claim than Buddha or Confucius or Mohammed ever made. None of them ever claimed to be God.
5. Also, Jesus claimed that he could forgive sin.
 - a) Story of the paralytic at Capernaum. Mk 2:3-12.
 - b) To the Jews, only God can forgive sin.

E. Liar, lunatic, or Lord.

1. So Jesus claimed to be God. This claim is either true or false. If false, then we have two and only two alternatives. Either he knew it was false, in which case he would be a liar, or he did not know it was false, in which case he would be a lunatic.
2. Could Jesus have lied?
 - a) If he lied, then he would have been deliberately deceiving his followers. But not only would he have been a liar, he would also be:
 - * A hypocrite, because he told others to be honest, whatever the cost, while he himself taught and lived a colossal lie.
 - * A demon, because he told others to trust him for their eternal destiny. If he could not back up his claims and knew it, then he was unspeakably evil.
 - * A fool, because it was his claim to being God that led to his crucifixion.
 - b) But we need only look at his person, his words and his work to conclude that he could not have been a liar.
 - * Look at his moral purity, dignity, sound intellect, air of truth.
 - * Consider his character that is so original, consistent, perfect, high above human greatness.
 - * He carried out a plan of unparalleled beneficence, moral magnitude and sublimity, and sacrificed his own life for it. Would he die for a lie?
 - * The results of his life and teachings have been lives changed for the better, thieves made honest, hateful individuals becoming channels of love, etc.
 - c) Such a man cannot be a liar.
3. Could Jesus have been a lunatic?
 - a) In Jesus we do not see any abnormalities or imbalance that usually go along with being deranged. In fact, his poise and composure would be amazing if he was insane.
 - b) He spoke some of the most profound sayings ever recorded.
 - c) Such a man cannot be a lunatic.
4. If not a liar or a lunatic, the only alternative left to us is that Jesus did speak the truth. He was, and is, the Son of God as he claimed.
5. Throughout scripture, we can read about a number of Jesus' contemporaries coming to the realization that he was God.

- a) Simon Peter. Mt 16:13-16.
- b) Martha. Jn 11:27.
- c) Nathanael. Jn 1:49.
- d) Thomas. Jn 20:27-28.
- e) The centurion. Mt 27:54.
- f) Even the evil spirits. Mt 8:29, Mk 1:24, Mk 3:11, Lk 4:41.

F. God confirmed Jesus' claim.

1. As many as there were who accepted the divinity of Jesus, there were also others who refused to accept him. How can we have confirmation of Jesus' divinity?
2. God Himself confirmed it.
 - a) In the miracle of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Jn 11:41-42.
 - * Jesus was giving a demonstration.
 - * To the Jews, God alone was the one who had the prerogative to give life or to take away life.
 - b) But the most conclusive proof is Jesus' own resurrection from the dead. The tombs of Buddha, Muhammed and the founders of all the great world religions are still with us. Only Jesus' tomb is empty.

G. Conclusion.

1. Jesus is a man whose words and life demand a response from us. He is making claims that affect us.
 - a) If he is not God, then we should have nothing to do with him, because we do not want to be followers of a liar or a lunatic.
 - b) But if he is God, then we should seriously desire to know him more. Our response will have eternal consequences.
2. Who is Jesus? Liar, lunatic or Lord? The choice is yours.

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L 3 - SESSION No. 3: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Goal: To understand the role of the Spirit of Jesus.

Expanded Outline

A. Introduction.

1. In the last talk, we saw that Jesus is Lord. Now Jesus has gone back to heaven, but he has sent us the Spirit to be with us.
 - * The Spirit's importance was stressed by Jesus. Jn 16:7.
2. Our topic, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, is a very important topic, because it is the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent to help us live the kind of life that God wants for us.
 - a) Such life in the Spirit was normal for the early Christians. They truly experienced the Holy Spirit at work.
 - * In the book of Acts, we see the Holy Spirit acting among them, guiding them, speaking to them, giving them gifts.
 - b) We need to know the Holy Spirit not just as a doctrine, but as a Person Who truly affects our lives.
 - * Unfortunately, while we know the Father and the Son, many do not know about the fellowship we need to have with the Holy Spirit.
 - * The role of the Holy Spirit is to empower our lives as Christians.
2. Much of Christianity today looks weak, lacking in power and effectiveness.
 - a) But Christians have not always been so lifeless. The early Christian movement was dynamic, strong, attractive.
 - * From a small sect, it conquered the Roman empire.
 - b) That same power is available to us today. That is the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. What needs to happen? We need to realize that true Christian living is not just a matter of human willpower, but a new heart, a new life from God.
 - a) We cannot do it on our own steam. It is the Holy Spirit Who enables us to experience God, a living relationship with Him, and His action in our lives.
 - b) With the Holy Spirit, we gain:
 - * Union with God. Eph 2:18. A new relationship with God as Father that is deep and personal. We meet Christ.
 - * A new nature. 2 Cor 5:17. We now have spiritual power for living the Christian life. We live Christ.
 - * Power to serve as Jesus' witnesses. Acts 1:8. We share Christ.
4. God wants all men to have this new life. This new life in the Holy Spirit is available to all who turn away from a life of sin and receive Jesus as Savior and Lord.

B. Receiving the Holy Spirit (what does it mean?).

1. The experience of the early disciples.
 - a) Jesus promises the Holy Spirit. Lk 24:49.
 - b) The disciples do as they are told. They stay in Jerusalem and wait.
 - c) The day of Pentecost (a Jewish holiday). Acts 2.
 - * V.1-4. An exciting event. Noise like a strong wind, fire, speaking in tongues.
 - * V.5-13. It created a big stir.
 - * V.14-21. Peter explained they were not drunk but that the Old Testament prophecies (Joel) were coming true.
 - * V.22-36. Peter proclaims the gospel.
 - * V.37-39. Peter tells them the response needed.
 - * V.40-41. The disciples were transformed from frightened men into bold, powerful apostles. 3,000 are converted!
 - * V.42-47. The Holy Spirit created bonds of love and unity among the new Christians. The Church was born.
 - d) Others as well received the Holy Spirit.
 - * Acts 8:14-17 (Samaria). Acts 10:44-46 (Cornelius). Acts 19:6 (Ephesus).
 - * Those who received the Holy Spirit knew the Lord more personally and more experientially.

2. What does receiving the Holy Spirit (or being baptized in the Spirit) mean for us today?
 - a) We can experience the same power and gift of the Spirit that the early Christians did.
 - * Same relationship with Jesus.
 - * Same transforming power.
 - * Same deep worship.
 - * Same power for speaking the gospel.
 - b) We can receive the same spiritual gifts. 1 Cor 12:1,4-11.
 - * Expound briefly on each gift (Reference: Book “Renewing the Face of the Earth”).
 - c) A word on the gift of tongues.
 - * Tongues is a common experience with the baptism in the Spirit. Just like in Acts.
 - * It is a gift from God. Thus it is important.
 - * Unlike the other spiritual gifts, tongues is a gift that is immediately manifest.
 - * Tongues can have great consequences on one’s spiritual life, especially prayer and worship. 1 Cor 14:2 -- We are enabled to truly speak to God. 1 Cor 14:14 – We are able to connect with God in prayer because it is our spirit connecting also to God who is a spiritual Being.
 - * It is an important first step, and is often the gateway to a fuller life in the Spirit.

3. How can we receive the baptism in the Spirit?
 - a) God has promised us the Holy Spirit. Lk 11:9-13.
 - b) So we simply take God up on His promise. We ask our Father to give us the Holy Spirit.
 - * We can be sure we will receive the Spirit because God said so. We just need to ask in faith.

4. What being baptized in the Spirit means for us.
 - a) For Catholics, this will not be the initial reception of the Holy Spirit. We already received the Spirit with the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.
 - * However, many baptized and confirmed Catholics do not live a vibrant life in Christ. They have not allowed the Spirit to work in and through them.
 - * So we renew our baptismal commitment, accept Jesus as Savior and Lord, and ask for a renewed infilling of the Holy Spirit.
 - * With the prayer for baptism in the Spirit, we will experience a fuller release of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
 - b) Give a brief personal testimony.
 - * Knowing God more personally.
 - * Praying in a new way (more God-centered, more of thanksgiving and praise rather than petition, more of listening).
 - * The Bible comes to life.
 - * Better relationships (with spouse, children, others).
 - * A new joy despite problems.
 - * Much more: peace, answered prayers, guidance, etc.

C. Conclusion.

1. Many Catholics do not know the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit's importance for our lives. To truly know Christ, we must know and have fellowship with the Holy Spirit.
2. God offers each of you new life. This new life in the Spirit is the normal Christian life. God desires it for all. Let us desire it as well.

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L 3 - SESSION No. 4: REPENTANCE AND FAITH

Goal: To start to live Christ by repenting of sin and turning to a renewed faith in Jesus.

Expanded Outline

A. Introduction.

1. In the first module we met Christ. We learned about the love of God manifested in sending His very own Son Jesus. We learned that Jesus is Lord. We learned about the role of his Spirit. Now that we have met Christ, we need to begin to live Christ.
2. As our lives have not been fully conformed to Christ, we are now called to respond to God's love, grace and fellowship. Our proper response is repentance and faith. Mk 1:14-15.
 - a) We need to repent, i.e., to reform our lives. And we need to believe in the gospel, i.e., have faith in Jesus and the message he brings.
 - b) Repentance and faith go together. It is a double-action response. It is inadequate just to have one without the other.
 - * To just reform our lives is an inadequate response to God. We need to also believe in Him and in His plans and promises.
 - * To simply believe in God without doing anything to reform our lives to become pleasing to God is also inadequate. Faith necessarily needs to be connected to morality. In other words, faith without works is dead.

B. Repentance.

1. The Greek word for repentance is "*metanoia*," which literally means a change of mind.
 - a) It is not just a simple confession of wrongdoing. Rather, it refers to a change in direction.
 - * It is a significant change in the way you live your life: dropping an old set of ideals and values by which you live your life and adopting new ones.
 - * Repentance affects the way you think and act, your attitudes, motives, thought and behavior.
 - b) More specifically, repentance means:
 - * A turning away from sin, evil, wrongdoing.
 - * Also, a turning away from running your own life. It is turning to a life of obedience to God and having Jesus on the throne of your life.
2. What repentance is not.
 - a) It is not dependent on feelings.
 - * Rather, it depends on an objective decision to accept only God's righteousness into one's life and reject anything not compatible with this.
 - b) It is not being sorry for sin because we are afraid of the consequences.
 - * We should not confuse sorrow for sin with sorrow for the consequences of sin. We must hate sin itself.

3. What must we do to repent?
 - a) Be honest. Admit that we have sin in our lives.
 - * Call a spade a spade. If it is sin, do not call it a “growth experience.”
 - b) Renounce sin. Actively turn away from sin and decide not to do it again.
 - c) Ask God’s forgiveness.
 - * 1 Jn 1:9.
 - * Story of the prodigal son. Lk 15:11-24. If we turn back to our Father, no matter how badly we have lived our lives, He will restore us to our rightful place as His child.
 - d) Avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, i.e., go to a priest for confession.

4. There are specific sins we need to renounce. These are serious sins that are totally incompatible with a relationship with God (that is, mortal sin). We are not referring to just so-called “small stuff” (i.e., venial sin, e.g., character flaws like always getting irritated), though these too have to be repented of. These mortal sins are:
 - a) Spiritualism and the occult.
 - * This includes witchcraft, fortune telling, seances, playing spirit of the glass, etc.
 - b) Sexual wrongdoing.
 - * This includes sexual intercourse outside marriage, adultery, active homosexuality.
 - c) Abortion. Also contraception, which the Church says is an intrinsic evil.
 - d) Serious crimes such as murder, rape, kidnapping, robbery, corruption, etc.
 - e) Drunkenness (not just drinking but drunkenness) and getting stoned on drugs.
 - f) Not going to Sunday Mass every week.

C. Faith.

1. Faith is belief in the gospel, which is the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ.
 - a) Faith is both belief in the messenger, Jesus, and in the message that he brings.
 - b) Faith means not just believing with our minds (an intellectual belief) that Jesus is the Savior, but believing in our hearts that he came to be our *personal* Savior.

2. Faith is a personal act and decision. It has several aspects (Rev 3:20).
 - a) It is a definite act. We must open the door if Jesus is to come into our lives.
 - b) It is an individual act. We need to open the door to our own heart. No one can do that for us.
 - c) It is a deliberate act. We do not have to wait for a supernatural light to flash upon us from heaven (like Paul’s experience) or an emotional experience to overtake us. We already know that Jesus came into this world and died for our sins. He is now standing outside the door of our hearts and is knocking. The next move is ours.
 - d) It is an urgent act. The future is uncertain and time is passing away.
 - e) It is an indispensable act.
 - * It is part of our double-action response.
 - * It is the step needed to receive all God has promised. Faith is relying on all God has said. Example of Peter walking on the water (Mt 14:25-29).

3. What faith is not.
 - a) It is not just a feeling.
 - * Rather, we accept God's word as truth, no matter what we feel.
 - b) It is not a blind leap.
 - * Peter stepped on the water because Jesus invited him to. He relied on what Jesus said because he trusted Jesus would not lie and because he knew Jesus had the power to do whatever he said he would do.
4. God has promised us new life. Faith is accepting that life and letting God show us how to live it. We must be willing to do whatever God wants of us, and actually do it.

D. Consequences of repentance and faith.

1. Acts 16:31.
 - a) A promise of salvation from sin, Satan, death.
 - b) A promise of forgiveness and eternal life with God.
2. Luke 11:9-13.
 - a) A promise of new life in the Spirit.
 - b) We can pray for a greater release of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

E. Conclusion.

1. 2,000 years ago, Jesus sounded the call to repentance and faith. It is the same call to us today. We are called to turn away from sin and all obstacles to God, and to accept Jesus as Lord.
2. As we respond positively, God promises us salvation from sin, forgiveness and reconciliation, eternal life, and the power of the Holy Spirit for our lives.
3. Accept the challenge to repent and believe in Jesus. Then begin to live Christ.

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L 3 - SESSION No. 5: LOVING GOD

Goal: To live Christ by living the first and greatest commandment.

Expanded Outline

A. Introduction.

1. To live Christ is to live out the two greatest commandments, that of loving God and loving neighbor, on which the whole law and the prophets depend (Mt 22:40), and by which we inherit eternal life (Lk 10:25).
2. We look first at what it means to love God.

B. The Christian ideal of loving God.

1. Ideals are important to move us on.
 - a) Goals direct our human behavior and plans for life.
 - * Money? Position? Fame?
 - b) Our goals become our ideal of life, influencing and directing our lives.
2. As Christians in the world, what should be our ideal?
 - a) We can give our lives to pursuing good goals (e.g., a better society), but if loving God is not our ideal, then this falls short.
 - b) God wants us to make loving Him our highest ideal. Thus God made it into a commandment of the highest priority. Mk 12:28-30.
3. Some people try to express love for God in different ways:
 - a) Psyching up pious feelings.
 - b) Humanist or philanthropic endeavors.
 - c) Acts of piety.

These are not wrong actions, but they are also not adequate expressions of loving God.

C. What it means to love God with all our heart.

1. First understand what Jesus meant by heart.
 - a) Modern day understanding = feeling or emotion.
 - b) Biblical understanding of heart: the seat of intelligence and decision. In English, we would use “will.”
 - * The heart is the symbol of the core of man, who the man is. It includes intelligent thought and will, along with feeling.
 - c) The Biblical understanding makes more sense, because the kind of love God requires cannot depend on feelings, which are changeable, but rather based on a commitment, a decision to love.

2. To love God with all our heart is to be totally committed to Him.
 - a) It is similar to the commitment we make in marriage.
 - b) It is a commitment to seek the Lord first and foremost. It is a decision to put God first, to be loyal to Him, to place His will and interest above our own.

3. How do we put the Lord first in our life?
 - a) It requires a decision to obey Him. Jn 14:15.
 - b) We need to develop a personal relationship with Him.
 - * A relationship that is dynamic and alive, not legalistic.
 - * A personal experience arising from our relationship as His sons and daughters.
 - c) We need to spend regular time with Him. In prayer. In reading the Bible.

D. What it means to love God with all our mind.

1. When God created us, He enabled us to think. He did this so we can figure out how to love and serve Him.
 - a) A good mind is not necessarily an intelligent mind.
 - b) The question is not so much how best to develop our mind, but rather how our mind can fulfill its main purpose—to love God.

2. To love God with all our mind means to serve Him with the use of our mind, or simply to make available our minds for His purposes.

3. Using our minds can have incredible consequences for society.
 - a) It can be applied to contribute to world progress (e.g., science, neurosurgery).
 - b) Or it can become an instrument for destruction (e.g., nuclear bomb, biological warfare).

4. How do we love and serve God with our mind?
 - a) Keep your mind clean and holy.
 - * Free of all evil thoughts. Mt 5:28.
 - * Free of uncharitable thoughts. Mt 7:1-5.
 - * Be very discerning in the use of TV, the Internet and other media, which can expose our minds to inputs not consistent with Christian living.
 - b) Let your mind be preoccupied with the things of God.
 - * How you can be holy, not just how you can be rich materially.
 - * How you can please God.
 - * Fill your mind with thoughts of God. Read the Bible, Christian books and other helpful Christian literature that can help form your Christian mind.
 - c) Use your mind according to God's truths and not according to the ways of the world.
 - * Our decisions and choices must be guided by God's word in the Bible.
 - * Keep our minds free of worries, because God promises to provide and care for us.
 - d) Use your mind actively for God's purpose.
 - * In your business, family, peer group, parish, etc.
 - * In Christian service.

E. What it means to love God with all our strength.

1. This means making all our resources available to God—time, money, energy, possessions, gifts, abilities.
 - a) We are God’s creation. He owns us. What we call “ours” is not really ours but His.
 - b) We must not set limits on our giving.

2. What are the concrete ways we can love God with our resources?
 - a) Money.
 - * Develop proper attitudes towards money.
 - We are stewards, not owners.
 - We have a responsibility to manage and use well the resources given to us. We must act according to God’s interests.
 - God is interested in our money, not because He needs it, but in order to see the condition of our heart. Mt 6:21.
 - * Concrete steps we can take:
 - Tithing. This is giving 10% back to God. Mal 3:7-10.
 - Resource sharing. This is temporary use of our resource without charge.
 - Almsgiving. This is an outright grant.
 - b) Time and talent.
 - * Have the proper attitude.
 - We do not own our time, we merely manage it.
 - We need to be generous with our time. Use it not just for ourselves, but for others.
 - * Concrete applications:
 - Seek God’s direction as to how you are to spend your time.
 - Examine what you do with your free time. Movie, novel, sleep? These are not wrong, but time can be better spent (e.g., Bible, Christian books).
 - Volunteer to do Christian service.

F. Loving God with all our soul.

1. We are to love God with our whole being (Lk 10:27)—emotional, spiritual, mental, physical. The love of God must engage the total person.
2. We are God’s creation, called to be holy, intended by Him to spend eternity together with Him. While in this world, we are to love God with all our soul.
 - a) Loving God is a very high ideal. Jesus showed us the way. Jesus is our model in loving God.
 1. He was dedicated to accomplishing his mission. Jn 4:34.
 2. He was obedient unto death. Lk 22:42.
 3. He was constantly seeking the Father’s will. Mk 1:35. Mt 14:23.

b) Conclusion.

1. Loving God is not as vague and impractical as you might think. Rather, it involves specific, practical actions, decisions and commitments.
2. It is not easy. We cannot do it on our own strength. We need the power of the Holy Spirit.

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L 3 - SESSION No. 6: LOVING NEIGHBOR

Goal: To live Christ by living the command to love one's neighbor.

Expanded Outline

A. Introduction.

1. Last session we looked at the first and greatest commandment. Today we look at the second. Mk 12:28-31.
2. Loving neighbor, together with loving God, form the core of the Christian life. Jesus summed up the whole law in these two greatest commandments.
3. The two go together. 1 Jn 4:20-21. Thus it is clear: no love for others, no Christianity.

B. What Christian love is not.

1. Love is not only having positive feelings.
 - a) Love is often equated with feelings of sexual attraction, personal affection, warmth.
 - b) But feelings change and thus cannot be the sole basis for love.
 - c) Feelings follow true love, but love is not equal to feelings.
2. Love is not always saying "yes."
 - a) To serve others or to put them first does not mean never turning down opportunities to serve.
 - * Sometimes you are unable. Sometimes you should not, even if able.
 - b) We have the wrong concept of a loving person as a nice guy who tries to please everybody.
3. Love is not defensive.
 - a) Love is risky business. What if one betrays you? What if your loved one dies? Love seems to set one up to get hurt.
 - * Thus guarded love tries to protect itself from injury. Avoidance of pain, difficulty and trial then become a condition attached to love.
 - b) Christian love is not guaranteed to be painless. But the pain is endured through commitment, and the injury is sustained through forgiveness, forbearance, etc.
4. Love is not self-seeking.
 - a) The focus in loving is not ourselves but others. By its nature, Christian love is ready for self-denial.
 - b) We recognize that putting others first can be bothersome or inconvenient for us.
5. Love is not manipulative.
 - a) You manipulate when you give love as a reward or withdraw love as a punishment.

- b) Because love is so powerful, people are tempted to use it in this way. But this is a conditional form of love.

C. So what is Christian love? What does God mean by love?

1. The answer is in John 15.

- a) Jesus spoke of a love that is connected with keeping God's commandments. Jn 15:9-10.
 - * There can be no Christian love apart from righteousness. Loving is not compatible with sinning.
 - * The world's experience shows that love apart from God has become convoluted with sin (e.g., sex outside marriage).
- b) Jesus was specific about how we are to love one another. Jn 15:12.
 - * We are not free to change or dilute Jesus' direction.
- c) How does Jesus love? Jn 15:13. With a self-sacrificial love.
 - * It is not just giving our time, imparting our wisdom, praying for others, etc., but it is being willing to die for others.

2. But most are not called to actually die for others. How then do we translate love into practical everyday terms?

- a) The answer is in Jn 13:1-5 (the foot-washing episode).
 - * What Jesus did was most unusual, because it was the task of the youngest slave. Thus Peter objected.
- b) Thus, dying on the cross was not the only example Jesus gave. He demonstrated Christian love as service love.
- c) When he finished, Jesus told them to do likewise. Jn 13:14-15.
 - * Later he commanded them to love each other according to his example. Jn 13:34.
- d) Christian love is therefore committed service. Gal 5:13b-14.

3. And who is your neighbor? Can you choose whom to love?

- a) The answer is in the parable of the good Samaritan. Lk 10:29b-37.
 - * The Jews hated the Samaritans, who had inter-married among the gentiles. Thus it was remarkable for this Samaritan to help the Jew who was robbed and beaten.
- b) The implication for us: all persons in need of our help are our neighbors.

D. How do we love in everyday life?

1. Characteristics of Christian love. 1 Cor 13:4-7.

- a) Patient - slow to anger; able to give allowance for the shortcomings of others.
- b) Kind - not an attitude of criticism, but posture and speech that builds up and encourages.
- c) Not jealous - not coveting what others have, or begrudging another for having something you do not have.
- d) Not pompous or inflated - humble, not thinking of your own importance; more impressed with your own unworthiness than merit.
- e) Not rude - accord honor and respect to one another.

- f) Not self-seeking - not focused on having your rights met, but more on your duties.
- g) Not quick-tempered - able to master your emotions and feelings.
- h) Not brooding over injury - not holding grudges or resentments.
- i) Not rejoicing over wrongdoing - always seeking the good of others, even enemies.
- j) Rejoices with the truth - telling the truth to one another.
- k) Forebears - can bear insult, injury, disappointment, without taking counter action; has self-control.
- l) Trusts - believing the best about other people.
- m) Hopes - having a positive attitude towards life and problems; can remain joyful and peaceful under any circumstance.
- n) Endures - can bear things, not with passive resignation but with triumphant fortitude.

2. Read the passage yourself but substitute “I” for “love.”

E. Conclusion.

1. Christian love is a command, and it is essential to Christianity.
 - a) We have seen what it is not (enumerate quickly).
 - b) We have seen what it is (summarize).
 - c) We have also taken a look at the various characteristics of love.
2. If you come to the conclusion that Christian love is difficult or even impossible, you are right.
 - a) Given the nature of love and also our own human limitations, mere human effort will fail. It is impossible without God’s help.
 - b) But Jesus who commanded us to love also gives us the power to love. To enable us to love, God made us temples of the Holy Spirit. Rom 5:5.

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L 3 - MINI TALK for VOCAL PRAYER

- A. Today I want to teach you another way of praying than what most Catholics are used to. Typically, most Catholics are only used to quieter ways of praying, e.g. silence, or just one person praying out, or just simple responses to another's prayers. Singing is one exception to the quieter approach most Catholics take.
- B. But the Bible shows other ways of prayer that are more varied and expressive.
1. We can learn from how the Israelites, God's chosen people, praised God. We look to their hymnbook, the book of Psalms.
 - a) Ps 95:1-2. Singing and crying out.
 - b) Ps 81:2-4. Singing, shouting and playing instruments.
 - c) Ps 150:3-5. Playing instruments and making a loud noise. The whole orchestra!
 - d) Ps 63:5. Raising hands.
 - e) Ps 47:2. Clapping.
 - f) Ps 149:3; 150:4. Dancing.
 - * The story of David in 2 Sm 6:14-16.
 2. In these passages, the Lord is being acclaimed as a king, with shouts, songs, instruments and dancing. When a king entered his throne room or appeared before an assembly of his people, all would stand and acclaim him with shouts and songs to express their love and loyalty, like "Long live the king!"
 3. This is a good way to worship the Lord.
 4. The angels and saints in heaven worship God in the same way. Rev 19:1,5-6. Since we are going to heaven, we might as well get used to heavenly worship now.
- C. A key element of this type of prayer is simultaneous praising. This is when people praise God in a loud voice all at the same time.
1. We praise God by acclaiming who He is (e.g., Lord of lords, King of kings, the Alpha and the Omega, etc.) and what He has done for us (our many blessings).
 2. This type of prayer helps us enter into the throne room of God, where we can truly feel His presence in our midst.
 3. This type of prayer also allows us to worship actively as a community, in a way that is enjoyable, inspiring and faith-building.
- D. We are going to do some vocal prayer in a short while.
1. At first it may seem strange or chaotic. But it is neither. Or to others it might be a turn-off. Please just be open to it. It is new and will take some getting used to.

2. But if you feel foolish, that is OK. You are in good company. We are all fools for Christ.
 - a) At Pentecost, some scoffers thought the apostles were drunk.
 - b) David made a fool of himself and so was despised by his wife Michal (2 Sm 6:16b).
But David chose God first of all. 2 Sm 6:21-22.
3. First we will sing a song of praise. During the song you can raise your hands, clap your hands, sway to the music. Right after the song we all together praise God in a loud voice. Then we sing another fast song and do the same.
4. Remember: we are coming before the great King of the universe. Let us acclaim our King and worship Him!

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L 3 - SESSION No. 7: EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT

Goal: To receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit and be empowered to witness to Christ.

Expanded Outline

A. Introduction.

1. In the second module, we started to learn how we can truly live Christ, by repentance and faith, and by living the two greatest commandments. These are not easy to do, and we need a power beyond ourselves. That is the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. Further, as part of living Christ, we are called to share Christ. We are to proclaim the good news of salvation in Jesus. We are to evangelize. The agent of evangelization is the Holy Spirit.

B. What the Bible says about the Holy Spirit.

1. Many people during the prophet Ezekiel's time were enmeshed in sin and spiritual lifelessness, like many Christians today. This is what God said to them:
 - a) Ez 36:26. God's promise of the Holy Spirit.
 - b) Ez 36:27. God's promise of help and power to do what is right. The Holy Spirit gives us the power.
2. The Holy Spirit that God promised through Ezekiel, Jesus gave to his disciples. With the Holy Spirit, we gain:
 - a) A new nature, spiritual power. Gal 5:16-23. The inward dimension. We are able to live Christ.
 - b) Power to serve. Acts 1:8. The outward dimension. We are able to share Christ.
3. God wants all men to have this new life. God sent His Son into the world so that we could be given the source of the new life, the Holy Spirit.

C. Introductory explanation prior to praying for baptism in the Holy Spirit.

1. We are here to claim God's promise of the Holy Spirit. Lk 11:9-13.
2. What will happen in the prayer session (procedure).
 - a) As a manifestation of repentance and faith, we will ask you to make your re-commitment to Christ. This was your baptismal commitment.
 - b) Then we will pray over you.
3. Some important points:
 - a) This is not a second baptism for Catholics, but a release of the power of the Holy Spirit, whom we already received when we were sacramentally baptized.
 - b) Jesus is the baptizer in the Holy Spirit.

- * We will pray with you. But it is basically between you and God. We are just instruments.
- * Thus *you* ask God to give you what He promised. And expect it to happen!
- c) Different things will happen to different people.
 - * Don't seek a particular kind of experience.
 - * Just turn to the Lord and receive the new life of the Holy Spirit from Him.

D. Receiving God's gifts.

1. Be aware of obstacles to receiving God's gifts.
 - a) An unrepentant attitude. Refusing to admit sin as sin.
 - b) Feeling unworthy. As such, we draw away from God's offered embrace.
 - c) Fear.
 - * Of what others will think, of looking foolish, of being overtaken.
 - * Of what God might ask of us.
 - d) Doubt. That God promised and will give the Spirit if we ask.
 - e) Pride. Attitude of not wanting or needing God's gifts.
2. You know what you need. Ask for it.
 - a) More courage to live the Christian life, strength to fight temptation, more knowledge of God, etc.
 - b) Also, God is offering you various gifts. 1 Cor 12:4-11.
 - * Note: expound quickly on each gift.
 - * Be open to whatever God wants to give you.
3. Some important right attitudes:
 - a) Relax. The more relaxed you are, the easier it is to receive God's gifts. It is harder to put something in a clenched fist than in a relaxed and open hand.
 - b) Don't be afraid. The Lord is here with us, and He loves you very much. He wants you to experience His love in a new way.
 - c) Don't be concerned about how you might act as you respond to the Spirit's promptings.
 - * Don't entertain thoughts that you might look or sound foolish if you begin to praise God in a new way, by raising your hands or speaking in tongues.
4. Receiving the gift of tongues.
 - a) Tongues is a gift of praise. It is one of God's gifts. That is what makes it important. God wants you to have this gift. So desire it.
 - b) Yielding to the gift.
 - * As we are praying over you, at one point we will sing "Spirit of the Living God." After that song, let us all praise God, in your own words. Follow my lead.
 - * Then start speaking out in tongues. If necessary, begin by uttering meaningless sounds (e.g., la-la-la). The Holy Spirit will form these sounds into tongues. (Analogy: it is easier to manipulate the steering wheel of a car when it is in motion rather than stationary).

- * Do not be analyzing the sounds or focusing on the experience. Just focus on the Lord and offer Him your utterance as prayers of praise.
 - * Resist the temptation to think that it is just you and not the Holy Spirit forming the sounds.
- c) Thus to sum up: you first of all desire the gift of tongues, because it is a gift from God; then you ask for it in faith; and then you cooperate with God's Spirit by opening your mouth and speaking out.
5. Final words:
- a) God wants you to have His gifts because He loves you and wants to live in you by His Holy Spirit. Desire God's gifts!
 - * In fact, strive eagerly for them. 1 Cor 12:31.
 - b) God offers and gives His gifts. Our part is to accept. Let us all give the Holy Spirit a welcome into our lives.
- E. The prayer session.
1. Explain the procedure quickly.
 2. Sing the song "Create in me."
 3. Do the prayer of "Commitment to Christ."
 4. Pray over for baptism in the Spirit. At some point, sing "Spirit of the Living God."
 5. After the praying over, have a short worship time (including singing in tongues).
- F. Closing exhortation.
1. Different people have different experiences.
 - a) Feeling is not the important thing. Rather, look for the new way that God is at work in you and respond to it (e.g., a new desire for prayer, for Scripture, etc.).
 - b) If you did not speak in tongues, do not worry about it. Do not equate being baptized in the Spirit with getting the gift of tongues.
 - * Continue to be open to the Lord forming your praise into tongues.
 2. Be aware that Satan can tempt you to doubt.
 - a) Satan is seeking to rob everyone of God's gift. For him the next best thing to keeping you from getting the gift is to keep you from using it.
 - b) Do not let feelings of doubt bother you. Just remember the fact that God promised it and that you asked for it, and so you have received it.
 3. Do not expect all your problems to go away all at once, though many will. The Holy Spirit will make a big change in you, and you will see it. But not everything will change. Some things will take a while to get worked out. But now you have a new power to use in working them out.
 4. Be faithful to a regular time of daily prayer. Spend a good portion of your prayer time in praise and thanksgiving in your own words. Pray in tongues everyday.
 5. What happened today is just a beginning.

L 3 - SESSION No. 8: GROWING IN THE SPIRIT

Goal: To learn the basic tools to growth and maturity as Christians.

Expanded Outline

A. Introduction.

1. The baptism in the Spirit is only a beginning. Now we need to grow in this new life in the Spirit. We need to be empowered to be witnesses who will share Christ to others.
2. In order to grow, we need to make use of the basic means of growth that the Lord provides us. These are: prayer, study, service, fellowship and the sacraments.
 - a) The Christian life can be pictured as a wheel of a cart. It has three components:
 - * The outer rim. This is the part of the wheel that meets the road. This represents daily Christian life.
 - * The hub. This is the part of the wheel from which the power emanates to the rim. It holds the wheel together. The hub is our Lord Jesus Christ, who is at the center of our lives. The power is that of the Holy Spirit.
 - * The spokes. These transmit the power and direction from the hub to the rim. In Christian experience, the spokes are the means of putting our whole life in contact with Christ, so that our life can be transformed by his power and direction.

B. The first tool: prayer.

1. Prayer is the primary means for establishing and maintaining a deep and loving personal relationship between ourselves and God.
2. A successful prayer life involves 3 important principles.
 - a) Our prayer must be faithful.
 - * Decide to spend time with the Lord everyday.
 - * Decide on the practical details.
 - When? Decide on a specific time of the day, which you can then protect.
 - Where? Mt 6:6. Find a place where you will not be disturbed or distracted.
 - How long? Begin with 5 to 10 minutes, and increase later.
 - * Adopt a format to begin.
 - ACTS. Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, Supplication.
 - Use daily prayer guides (e.g., God's Word Today, The Word Among Us, Our Daily Bread).
 - b) Our prayer must be led by the Holy Spirit.
 - * Scheduled and structured prayer is helpful, but could make our prayer dry and mechanical. Be open to changing your format as the Spirit leads.
 - c) Our prayer must be centered on a relationship with Jesus.
 - * Prayer is a means to an end, not an end in itself. Our goal is not "to pray" or even "to pray well," but to grow in our relationship with the Lord.

- * People can get wrapped up in techniques. While these can help, prayer is really very simple. It is a matter of loving God and being loved by Him.
 - * Concentrate not on prayer but on the Lord.
3. The intercession of Mary and the saints is a powerful tool of prayer. A devotion to Mary and the saints is part and parcel of a Catholic's faith. Praying the Holy Rosary is such a tool.

C. The second tool: study.

1. We need to know God and understand Him and His ways. Study is a deliberate, focused exercise of the intellect, not referring primarily to scholarly or academic endeavor but to the wider process of understanding more about God so we can love and better serve Him.
2. Three ways we can learn more about God.
 - a) The Bible.
 - * This is the most important, because this is the very word of God. It teaches us who God is, what He has done, and what He wants us to do.
 - * We should read the Bible daily.
 - Start with 10 to 15 minutes.
 - Pursue a more deliberate study of portions of the Bible.
 - We should make it a goal to read the whole Bible.
 - * We should attend seminars that help us learn more about the Bible and Bible methodologies, such as the Basic Bible Seminar (BBS) and the Liturgical Bible Study (LBS).
 - b) Spiritual reading.
 - * After reading what God has said of Himself (Bible), we can read what men have said about God. We can draw on spiritual insights and study throughout the life of the Church.
 - * This includes reading spiritual books, magazines, articles, etc.
 - c) Teachings and preachings.
 - * Our teaching and formation program in the parish.
 - * The word of God spoken in the Sunday homily, in parish events, in conferences, etc.
 - * Begin the habit of taking notes.

D. The third tool: service.

1. Jesus, through the Holy Spirit, is at work in us, not just for our personal development but also to equip us for effective service for him and his people.
2. We need to take on a mentality of service so that we see our whole life given over to God's work. We need to take on the heart of a servant, just like Jesus. Mt 20:26-28.
 - a) As we put the Lord first in our lives, he calls us to reach out also to others.
 - b) Service helps us grow because it touches the most basic attitudes we have of ourselves and our independence. To serve others is to be humble.

3. Ways we can serve:
 - a) First we serve God by the way we live.
 - * Daily prayer and Scripture reading.
 - * Pursuit of righteousness and holiness.
 - b) We also serve by performing the basic responsibilities God has given us in our daily lives.
 - * E.g., as spouse, as parent, as employee, etc.
 - c) Then we serve our fellow men by recognizing the many built-in opportunities for service in day-to-day life.
 - * E.g., hospitality, offering a ride, babysitting, visiting the sick, etc.
 - d) Make ourselves and our resources available for God's work. Our time, talent, treasure.
 - * Do good works. Jas 2:14-17.
 - * Support through prayer and financial giving Catholic ministries that further the spread of the gospel.
 - * Look for opportunities to give your time and energy to serve in a Catholic group on a regular basis.
 - * Serve in and support the life of your parish.
 - e) Evangelize. Share Christ with family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, and the world at large.

E. The fourth tool: fellowship.

1. Fellowship refers to almost everything that Christians do together as a body. It is the concretization of a spiritual reality, that we are brothers and sisters belonging to one family.
2. We do not become complete Christians by ourselves. We must be joined to others in order to experience the fullness of Christian life.
 - a) We need the support of others. We need their wisdom and strength.
 - b) We need to do things together. Fellowship is not an optional extra.
3. Some ways to experience Christian fellowship.
 - a) Worship in liturgies, prayer meetings, conferences.
 - b) Coming together for teaching and formation.
 - c) Serving together (like the team in this LCS).
 - d) Parish events.
 - e) Social gatherings.

F. The fifth tool: the sacraments and devotion to Mary.

1. The most important tool for spiritual growth are the sacraments. They are the main channels of God's grace for our lives.
 - a) Of the 7 sacraments, two (**Baptism** and **Confirmation**) are received only once. **Matrimony** is also only once, unless the spouse dies and one re-marries. **Holy**

- Orders** is for priests and ordained deacons. **Anointing of the Sick** is for those who are seriously ill (not just at the point of death).
- b) **Penance** (Reconciliation) and the **Eucharist** are the two sacraments that are received over and over.
2. We recommend frequent confession (Penance) and communion (Eucharist).
 - a) Though confession is required only once a year, we should avail of this more often. We of course should immediately go to confession if we have committed mortal sin.
 - b) Though communion is required only once a year during the Easter season, we should receive communion, with the proper disposition, whenever we go to Mass, which should be at least every Sunday.
 3. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. She is the foremost disciple of Jesus and we can grow by imitating her and asking for her intercession.
 - a) She is the best model for faith, obedience and holiness.
 - b) She is the Seat of Wisdom, having directly taken in and treasured in her heart the wisdom coming from her Son.
 - c) She is Queen of heaven and earth, and is our Mediatrix.

G. Conclusion.

1. When we meet Christ, we are just “babies in Christ.” We are to grow to maturity, called to live Christ and to share Christ. In order for this to happen, God provides us with tools.
2. If you make use of these tools to growth and are faithful, you will not be disappointed.

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L 3 - SESSION No. 9: THE LIVE CHRIST, SHARE CHRIST MOVEMENT

Goal: To be part of the LCSC movement and help mainstream Catholic lay evangelization.

Expanded Outline

A. Introduction.

1. We are called to meet Christ, to live Christ, and to share Christ. This is what it truly means to be a Catholic Christian.
2. Unfortunately, most Catholics are not living in Christ. They do not even understand what it really means to be a Christian.

B. Misconceptions or incomplete notions about Christianity.

1. Christianity is reduced to a mere religious system.
 - a) A set of doctrines to believe in, like the Apostles Creed.
 - * Faith remains on an intellectual level.
 - b) A set of religious practices.
 - * Going to Mass, novenas, etc.
 - c) Knowing or reading a lot about God.
 - d) Doing a lot for God.

All the above are incomplete notions unless what we believe in is translated into our lives, i.e., we base our values and lives on these doctrines we believe in. Our religious practices ought to be experiences of faith and not mere rituals we do as a matter of habit.

2. Christianity is a mere moral system.
 - a) A set of do's and don'ts; a set of rules regarding right and wrong.
 - b) Avoiding those things that can make you go to hell.

These are incomplete notions because they make religion legalistic and sterile. There is no life and joy. Rather, our religion is our life. We do or don't do certain things not because the rule book says so, but as an expression of our relationship with God and with our brethren.

3. Christianity is a social, humanitarian system.
 - a) Equating Christianity with humanitarianism.
 - b) A Christian is someone who does good and is kind. He is a nice person who always smiles, is friendly, never gets angry, and tries to please everyone.

This is an incomplete notion because it leaves out the deity of Christ, and limits Christianity to merely being a good Samaritan. In fact, a Christian can get angry, as Jesus did. In fact, non-Christians can do good.

4. Christianity is an escape from the realities of life, an opium of the poor and the oppressed. It is for the weak, for those who cannot cope with life.

A wrong notion, because Christians are not taught to escape problems but to face them.

C. What then is Christianity?

1. It is knowing Christ, living Christ, and sharing Christ.
2. Meeting and knowing Christ.
 - a) What makes us Christians is our loving, personal relationship with God. It is being a friend of Jesus.
3. Living Christ.
 - a) As Christians, we are called to live like Christ.
 - b) We are to be holy as God is holy. 1 Pt 1:15-16.
 - * We are called to Christian perfection. Mt 5:48.
 - c) We are to be true disciples of Jesus. Lk 9:23.
 - * Self-denial.
 - * Embracing the cross.
 - * Following Jesus.
4. Sharing Christ.
 - a) To experience the blessing of a new life in Christ is to desire to share that life with others.
 - b) We are to proclaim the good news of salvation in Christ to others. We are to evangelize.
 - * We do this in the normal, day-to-day circumstances of our lives (relatives, friends, co-workers, etc.).

D. Putting it all together.

1. We have met Christ. We have started to live Christ. We need to go and share Christ.
 - a) We need to enter more deeply into a life in Christ. Deeper transformation. Greater empowerment. More zeal for the gospel.
 - b) We need to help mainstream Catholic lay evangelization. We must help bring Catholics back to God and back to the church.
 - c) All this can happen through the LCSC movement in our parish.
2. The larger picture: the call to the New Evangelization.
 - a) We are experiencing a tsunami of evil in the world.
 - * Anti-life and anti-family forces are forcing their diabolical agenda on all nations.
 - b) The enemies of the Church are also within.
 - * Dissident Catholics including some clerics.
 - c) There is a dire need for renewal and revival in the Church and society.
 - Bring in nominal and lapsed Catholics. So meet Christ.

- Grow in holiness and discipleship. So live Christ.
 - Raise an army of workers, evangelizers, missionaries. So share Christ.
3. The Live Christ, Share Christ (LCSC) movement.
 - a) We have a responsibility to encourage and support each other in the Christian life. We need to grow together as Catholics. We need to serve Christ and his Church.
 - b) We do this by becoming part of the LCSC movement, through commitment embodied in a covenant.
 - * Read the LCSC covenant and explain briefly.
 - c) We provide parish support.
 - * Monthly prayer assembly.
 - * Formation courses as needed (growth courses, marriage enrichment, youth camp, etc.).
 - * LCSC programs if desired by the parish.
 - Live Pure (chastity program for youth)
 - Live Life (pro-life advocacy)
 - Live the Word (Liturgical Bible Study)
 - Live Full (building physical communities for the poor of the parish)
 - * Resource materials for further growth (books, CDs, etc.).
 - * Other activities such as Family Days, conferences, social events.

D. What now?

1. Throughout this LCS, many things have happened:
 - a) Your repentance, personal conversion, and a renewed faith in God.
 - b) Your acceptance of Jesus as Savior and Lord.
 - c) Your empowerment through baptism in the Holy Spirit.
2. Now you need to allow the Lord to continue the process of your transformation in Christ.
 - a) Grow to know, love and serve God more. Holiness and Christian perfection.
 - b) Build up the parish community. Our life together as Church.
 - c) Evangelize all Catholics of the parish.
3. We have come to the end of our LCS. But actually, this is not the end. It is really just the beginning. We have before us a whole new life with God and with one another. Let us go forth to live Christ and to share Christ.

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L 4 - PARTICIPANT'S HANDOUTS

L 4 - SESSION No. 1: THE LOVE OF GOD

Participant's Handout

1. The situation in the world today.
 - * Serious disorder in society: war, poverty, murder, etc.
 - * On a personal level: loneliness, depression, fear, etc.
 - * Man makes various efforts to improve the world but is not succeeding because these are not based on God's wisdom.

2. God has a plan for bringing us out of confusion and disorder.
 - * God is interested in our lives.
 - * God wants to restore our fellowship and intimacy with Him.

3. We need God's point of view.
 - * Satan is real and is behind the evils in the world.
 - * On our own strength, we cannot overcome the challenges in our Christian life.

4. Jesus Christ is the answer.
 - * Jesus is the fullness of God's love.
 - * In Jesus, God's plan for restoration can begin to happen in our lives.
 - * We need simply to accept Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Discussion starter

Share about how you have personally experienced God's love.

Scriptures for daily prayer

Day 1	Isaiah 55:8-9	Day 5	Ephesians 1:7-10
2	Isaiah 48:17-19	6	John 3:16-18
3	Jeremiah 29:11-14	7	Romans 10:9-13
4	John 15:4-7		

The challenge

God has loved you with an eternal love. The ultimate manifestation of this love was sending God's own Son to suffer and die for you. Will you open your heart to receive the fullness of His love? Will you open your mind to explore the richness of God's plan for you through the rest of the Life in Christ Seminar?

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L 4 - SESSION No. 2: THE GRACE OF JESUS

Participant's Handout

1. The impact of Jesus on history.
 - * His coming was pre-announced through Old Testament prophecies.
 - * He struck history with such impact that he split it in two: BC and AD.
 - * He came into the world not to live but to die.

2. Jesus was a very impressive person.
 - * A very attractive personality.
 - * A magnetic leader.
 - * A man of extraordinary authority.

3. Jesus claimed to be God.
 - * No other great religious leader claimed to be God.
 - * He clearly was not a liar or a lunatic.
 - * He claimed that he could forgive sin, something only God can do.
 - * Many of his contemporaries came to the realization that he indeed was God.
 - * God confirmed his claim by raising him from the dead.

Discussion starter

Discuss how you saw or thought of Jesus before, and what new insights you have gotten through the talk.

Scriptures for daily prayer

Day 1	John 6:32-40	Day 5	Mark 2:5-12
2	John 10:7-15	6	John 8:51-58
3	John 14:6-11	7	John 11:25-27, 38-44
4	John 5:18-24		

The challenge

Jesus is God. Are you willing to accept him as Lord of your life? As Lord, will you allow him to rule your life totally?

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L 4 - SESSION No. 3: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Participant's Handout

1. Much of Christianity today looks weak and is lacking in power and effectiveness.
 - * True Christian living is not just a matter of human willpower, but a new heart, a new life from God.
 - * God wants all men to have this new life.
 - * This new life in the Holy Spirit is available to all who receive Jesus as Savior and Lord.

2. With the Holy Spirit, we gain:
 - * Union with God. We meet Christ.
 - * A new nature. We live Christ.
 - * Power to serve. We share Christ.

3. What it means to receive the Holy Spirit.
 - * This was the experience of the early disciples at Pentecost.
 - * We can experience the same power and gifts of the Spirit that the early Christians did.
 - * We simply take God up on His promise. We ask our Father to give us the Holy Spirit.
 - * This will not be the initial reception of the Holy Spirit, Whom we already received at baptism. Rather, what will be experienced is a fuller release of the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Discussion starter

Share about your experience of God's Spirit in your life.

Scriptures for daily prayer

Day 1	Ezekiel 36:25-27	Day 5	Luke 11:9-13
2	Jeremiah 31:31-34	6	Acts 1:8, 2:1-12
3	Joel 3:1-5	7	1 Corinthians 12:1-11
4	John 14:23-26		

The Challenge

God is calling us to live a life of holiness and spiritual power. For this, God has promised us the Holy Spirit. Will you trust in the promise of your Father? Will you accept Jesus as your Savior and Lord? Will you ask for the infilling of the Holy Spirit in your life?

* * *

L 4 - SESSION No. 4: REPENTANCE AND FAITH

Participant's Handout

1. God loves us, Jesus is our Lord, the Holy Spirit is our Advocate. We have met Christ, and now we need to live Christ. Our proper response to all God has done for us is repentance and faith.
2. The Greek word for repentance is "*metanoia*," which literally means a change of mind.
 - * It is a change of direction in life. It is a change in the way we live our lives, dropping an old set of ideals and values and adopting new ones.
 - * Specifically, repentance means a turning away from sin, evil, wrongdoing and running your own life.
 - * Further, it is turning to a life of obedience to God and having Jesus on the throne of your life.
3. Specific serious sins we must renounce: spiritualism and the occult; sexual wrongdoing; abortion and contraception; serious crimes (murder, rape, etc.); drunkenness and drugs; not going to Sunday Mass every week.
4. Faith is belief in the good news of salvation in Jesus.
 - * It is a belief in Jesus as our personal Savior.
5. Consequences of repentance and faith:
 - * Salvation from sin, Satan, death.
 - * Forgiveness and eternal life with God.
 - * New life in the Holy Spirit.

Discussion starter

Share with one another areas where you need to turn more fully to God.

Scripture for daily prayer

Day 1	Mark 1:14-15	Day 4	1 John 1:5-10
2	Galatians 5:13-21 and 1 Corinthians 6:9-11	5	Luke 15:11-24
3	Ephesians 5:1-10	6	Luke 11:9-13
		7	Hebrews 11:1-40

The challenge

Jesus sounded the call to repentance and faith 2,000 years ago. This is the same call to us today. Turn away from sin and all obstacles to God, and accept Jesus as Lord and Savior. Then take God up on all His promises.

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L 4 - SESSION No. 5: LOVING GOD

Participant's Handout

1. God wants us to make loving Him our highest ideal. Thus God made it into a commandment of the highest priority.
2. We are to love God with all our heart.
 - * Not an emotion, which is changeable, but rather a commitment, a decision to love.
 - * We are to be totally committed to God, to put Him first.
 - * We need to have a personal relationship with God, and spend regular time with Him in prayer and the Bible.
3. We are to love God with all our mind.
 - * We are to serve God with the use of our mind.
 - * We keep our mind clean and holy.
 - * We preoccupy our mind with the things of God.
4. We are to love God with all our strength.
 - * We give God all our resources--time, money, energy, gifts, abilities, possessions.
5. We are to love God with all our soul, with our whole being.
6. Jesus is our model in loving God.
 - * Dedicated to accomplishing his mission.
 - * Obedient unto death.
 - * Constantly seeking the Father's will.

Discussion starter

How have I loved God in a concrete way?

Scriptures for daily prayer

Day 1	Matthew 22:36-38 and Mark 12:28-30	Day 4	Matthew 7:1-5
2	John 14:21-24	5	Malachi 3:7-10
3	Romans 12:1-2	6	1 Timothy 6:7-14
		7	John 4:34

The challenge

Loving God is not as vague and impractical as you may think. It involves specific, practical actions, decisions and commitments. Can you make loving God your first and highest ideal? Are you ready to make Jesus the model of your life?

* * *

L 4 - SESSION No. 6: LOVING NEIGHBOR

Participant's Handout

1. Loving neighbor, together with loving God, form the core of the Christian life.
2. Love is not only having positive feelings, not always saying "yes," not defensive, not self-seeking, not manipulative.
3. Christian love is:
 - * Connected with keeping God's commandments.
 - * A self-sacrificial love.
 - * Committed service to others.
4. Our neighbor is anyone who is in need of our help.
5. Characteristics of Christian love in 1 Cor 13:4-7.
 - * Substitute "I" for "love."

Discussion starter

How has your understanding of love changed based on its biblical meaning?

Scriptures for daily prayer

Day 1	Matthew 22:37-40 and Mark 12:28-34	Day 4	1 Corinthians 13:1-13
2	John 13:1-5,12-15,34-35	5	1 John 2:7-11
3	John 15:9-17	6	1 John 3:16-18
		7	1 John 4:7-21

The challenge

Jesus showed us the way to true Christian love by the parable of the good Samaritan, by his washing of his disciples' feet, and most of all by his dying for us on the cross. Are you prepared to love others in the way Jesus loved you?

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L 4 - SESSION No. 7: EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT

1. God has promised the Holy Spirit to His people. With the Holy Spirit, we gain a new nature, spiritual power, and the power to serve. We are able to live Christ and to share Christ.
2. Jesus is the baptizer in the Holy Spirit. We turn to him and receive the new life in the Holy Spirit from him.
3. Be aware of obstacles to receiving God's gifts. These are an unrepentant attitude, feeling unworthy, fear, doubt and pride.
4. God offer us various gifts. One of these is the gift of tongues.
 - * Tongues is a gift of praise.
 - * To receive this gift, we simply desire it, ask for it in faith, and cooperate with the Spirit's promptings in speaking out.
5. We must nurture the new life and God's gifts.
 - * Do not allow Satan to rob you of your gift.
 - * Do not expect all problems to go away at once, though many will.
 - * Be faithful to a regular time of daily prayer.

Scriptures for daily prayer

Day 1	Galatians 5:16-25	Day 5	2 Corinthians 4:16-5:5
2	Romans 8:5-13	6	Ephesians 6:18
3	1 Corinthians 14:1-5	7	Matthew 25:14-23
4	1 Corinthians 3:16-17		

The challenge

You have claimed Christ's promise of the Holy Spirit to anyone who asks. You have been baptized in the Holy Spirit and have received a new life from the Lord. You are "a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, new things have come" (2 Cor 5:17). You have begun a new life in faith. Will you commit yourself fully to Jesus Christ and grow into the life in the Holy Spirit?

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L 4 - SESSION No. 8: GROWING IN THE SPIRIT

1. The baptism in the Spirit is only a beginning. Now we need to grow in this new life of the Spirit.
2. There are 5 basic tools to growth.
 - a) Prayer. The primary means for establishing and maintaining a deep and loving personal relationship with God.
 - * Must be faithful. Pray daily.
 - * Must be led by the Holy Spirit.
 - * Must be centered on a relationship with Jesus.
 - * Can use other forms like the Holy Rosary.
 - b) Study.
 - * The Bible. Read daily.
 - * Spiritual reading (books, magazines, articles, etc.).
 - * Teachings and preachings.
 - c) Service.
 - * By the way we live, in pursuit of righteousness and holiness.
 - * Performing our basic responsibilities in life.
 - * Serving our fellow men.
 - * Giving of our time, talent and treasure.
 - * Evangelize. Share Christ.
 - d) Fellowship.
 - e) Sacraments and devotion to Mary.

Discussion starter

What tools to Christian growth have not been fully utilized in your life?

Scriptures for daily prayer

Day 1	1 Peter 1:13-16	Day 5	Matthew 20:25-28
2	Matthew 6:5-13	6	James 2:14-17
3	Matthew 18:19-20	7	1 Corinthians 12:12-27
4	Hebrews 4:12-13		

The Challenge

God's call for every Christian is to grow in holiness. To this end, God has provided us with the tools for growth. Will you eagerly avail of these tools and strive to be holy as God is holy?

* * *

L 4 - SESSION No. 9: THE LIVE CHRIST, SHARE CHRIST MOVEMENT

1. We are called to meet Christ, live Christ and share Christ. Such is authentic Christianity.
2. Misconceptions or incomplete notions about Christianity.
 - * A mere religious system.
 - * A mere moral system.
 - * A social or humanitarian system.
 - * An escape from the realities of life.
3. The essence of Christianity is knowing Christ, living Christ, and sharing Christ.
 - * It is a relationship initiated by God, out of His mercy and love for us.
 - * In Christianity, we become a new creation and participate in the very life of Christ.
 - * We take on the nature of God, which is holiness.
4. We are invited to participate in the Live Christ, Share Christ movement in our parish.
 - * This is a response to the New Evangelization.
 - * We continue our journey of faith together.
 - * We help mainstream Catholic lay evangelization.

Scriptures for daily prayer

Day 1	Titus 3:3-7	Day 5	Luke 12:22-31
2	Galatians 4:4-7	6	Matthew 7:7-11
3	Colossians 3:5-10	7	Romans 8:28-39
4	Isaiah 12:2		

The Challenge

God is a loving Father Who cares for us and has a plan for our lives. Will you continue to be open to discover the fullness of God's plan for you? Can you do this in absolute trust in God, ready to place yourself completely in His hands?

* * *

L 5 - RESOURCE PERSONS FOR THE LCS

In mounting an LCS, we need the following resource persons:

(1) Team Leader

- * Oversee the whole LCS.
- * Assign speakers.
- * Prepare facilitators.
- * Form the service team.
- * Lead the team meeting after every session (or after every module or after whole LCS, depending on the schedule chosen).
- * Report the results of the LCS to the parish priest.
- * Submit formal LCS report to the LCSC Moderator (including e-mail addresses of participants).

(2) Speakers.

- * Do the talks.

(3) Music

- * Decide on appropriate songs for each session.
- * Provide the music.
- * Teach participants the songs.

(4) Facilitators

- * Handle the discussion groups.
- * Follow up and encourage their group participants to persevere through the LCS.
- * Encourage reading of the Bible, especially the daily readings per session.

(5) Administrative support

- * Arrange the facilities.
- * Prepare Participant's Handouts.
- * Handle registration of participants. Keep information sheets.
- * Record the talks (if desired).
- * Keep record of attendance at the sessions.
- * Arrange for food and snacks.
- * Prepare graduation kits.
- * Clean up the venue after the LCS.

Note: Graduation kit consists of the following:

- (1) Covenant card.
- (2) LCSC I.D.
- (3) Daily Bible Reading Guide
- (4) Paper on the Live Christ, Share Christ LOGO
- (5) Certificate of Completion

L 6 - LEADING A DISCUSSION GROUP

PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION GROUPS

1. To help the participants to understand and digest the material presented.
2. To allow them to express their thoughts and feelings, and to give them a chance to ask questions.
3. To help people to open up and respond to God's invitation and grace.
4. To develop friendships among the participants, which are a big encouragement for them to continue and finish the whole LCS.
5. To provide a place for them to begin to experience Christian fellowship, preparing the way to participation in the parish community after the LCS.

LEADING A DISCUSSION GROUP

1. The discussion groups form and begin right after the talk. The men meet separately from the women.
2. When first meeting as a discussion group, try to establish a relaxed atmosphere. Don't be overly serious, but maintain control. Inspire confidence in others that you know what everybody is supposed to be doing. Remember that many people have never been in this type of discussion group. Be clear about instructions like sitting in a circle, etc.
3. Start and end every discussion with a short prayer. Moving into Module Two and Module Three, you may ask others in your group to lead the prayer if they seem ready, but don't put them on the spot.
4. For the first session, start with introductions and let everyone get to know one another.
5. Assure them that the principle of confidentiality is at work in your discussions. Whatever is shared basically remains only within the group. General reports during team meetings maintain the anonymity of sharers.
6. Let the group know that they are free to ask relevant questions or bring up relevant problems.
7. For Module One, if the participants are still not very open or are still shy, you may have to begin the sharing yourself. This also is a good way of showing them how the discussion/sharing is to be handled.
8. If the group is eager to respond to the talk, allow them to, without bothering with the discussion starter.
9. Encourage shy people who don't speak much by asking them questions. Don't put them on the spot, however. Start with easy general questions at first, then work your way up to more specific things about themselves. Make sure everyone gets to talk during the discussion. Don't allow anyone, including yourself, to take too much time and dominate the discussion.

10. One way to control dominant people in discussion groups is to speak to the person before the session begins. Encourage their sharing but impress them with the limited amount of time and the need for everyone to share.
11. Don't let the discussion get off the subject. Gently but authoritatively tell them that it is time to stop this line of conversation. Suggest another time or place for such discussion to the people involved.
12. It is usually best to open up the discussion to any questions only after you are sure they have understood the main points of the talks, or if they won't share. Quite often questions asked do not have anything to do with the talk.
13. When answering questions, you don't need to offer everything on the subject, but only what will help the person most at this time in his/her life. On the other hand, be willing to say "I don't know" and/or "I'll find out."
14. Don't take up serious theological issues in the discussions.
15. Don't talk down to people or appear to be an expert on something you are not.
16. Avoid Christian jargon. There is a way in which new people cannot enter into the meanings of the phrases we know so well.
17. Take notes and write down significant details of conversations in your group so that you can keep track of your people's progress and also as a basis for the team meeting afterwards.
18. As you listen to the talk, discern which points your people especially need to hear and try to bring those out in your sharing or in theirs.
19. Keep your eye on the time. Make sure that there is enough time for everyone to share.

* * *

L 7 - INFORMATION SHEET**LIVE CHRIST, SHARE CHRIST
LIFE IN CHRIST SEMINAR**

Date: _____

(FAMILY NAME)_____
(FIRST NAME)_____
(MIDDLE NAME)_____
(NICKNAME)

Home Address: _____

Res. Tel. No. _____ Cell phone _____

Date of Birth _____ Place of birth _____

Educational Attainment _____ Occupation _____

Employer _____

Office Address _____

Line of Business _____ Office Tel. No. _____

Hobbies & Interests _____

Languages/dialects spoken _____

Email Address: _____

Parish _____

Parish service _____ Chapel _____

Name of spouse: _____

Wedding Anniversary Date _____

Names of ChildrenAge

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

L 8 - LCS SCHEDULES

The LCS can be offered in different ways, such as:

- (1) Over one week-end.
- (2) Over 3 weeks, with one module of 3 sessions per week.
- (3) Over 9 weeks, with one session per week.

The one week-end schedule is as follows:

Saturday

7:30 a.m.	Arrival and registration
8:30	Teaching of songs
9:00	Welcome and opening remarks
9:30	Session #1: The Love of God Group discussion
10:45	Session #2: The Grace of Jesus Group discussion
12:00 n.n.	Lunch
1:00 p.m.	Teaching of songs
1:30	Session #3: The Fellowship of the Holy Spirit Group discussion
2:45	Session #4: Repentance and Faith Group discussion
4:00	Break
4:30	Session #5: Loving God Group discussion
5:45	Session #6: Loving Neighbor Group discussion
7:00	Dinner
8:00	Mini-talk on vocal prayer and worship
8:45	Session #7: Empowered by the Spirit
9:30	End

Sunday

7:30	Arrival and registration
8:30	Teaching of songs
8:45	Worship
9:00	Session #8: Growing in the Spirit Group discussion
10:15	Session #9: The Live Christ, Share Christ Movement
11:00	Open forum/sharings Dedication
12:00 n.n.	End

Note: it is suggested that there be Mass, possibly after the Dedication on Sunday.

For the 3-week schedule, the LCS can be mounted on say a Saturday or Sunday afternoon. With one module per week of 3 sessions, the time requirement would be 5-1/2 hours, with the schedule generally as follows:

00.00 hours	Arrival and registration
00.30	Teaching of songs
01.00	Talk (first)
01.45	Discussion group
02.15	Break
02.30	Talk (second)
03.15	Discussion group
03.45	Break
04.00	Talk (third)
04.45	Discussion group
05.15	Announcements, closing prayer
05.30	End

Note: For the third module, there is a mini-talk at the start. There is no discussion group after the first talk (session #7). There is no discussion group but an Open Forum after the final talk (session #9).

For the regular 9-week schedule, the LCS can be mounted at any time, including week evenings. The time requirement for each session would be 2-1/2 hours, with the schedule generally as follows:

00.00 hours	Arrival and registration
00.30	Teaching of songs
01.00	Talk
01.45	Discussion group
02.15	Announcements, closing prayer
02.30	Fellowship. End.

* * *

L 9 - COMMITMENT TO CHRIST

Do you renounce Satan and all wrongdoing? (response: I do)

Do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, that he died to free us from our sins, and that he rose to bring us new life? (response: I do)

Will you follow Jesus as your Lord? (response: I will)

(All together) Lord Jesus Christ, I want to belong to you from now on. I want to be free from the dominion of darkness and the rule of Satan, and I want to enter into your Kingdom and be a part of your people. I will turn away from all wrongdoing, and I will avoid everything that leads me to wrongdoing. I ask you to forgive all the sins that I have committed. I offer my life to you, and I promise to obey you as my Lord. I ask you to baptize me in the Holy Spirit. AMEN.

* * *

L 10 - PRAYING OVER FOR BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT

Lord, we praise and thank you for this time when you gather us in your name. Thank you for bringing us together in this seminar, where we have met you and have been learning about your way of life. We know that you desire so much more for us, because of your great love for us and your wonderful plan for our future. We are here now to receive the continued blessings that you have already prepared for us.

Lord, we pray for your protection first of all. We know the evil one is not happy with what you are doing in our lives, and would like to keep us from drawing closer to you. In your name we bind all the evil forces that are hovering around this place. We ask you to direct your angels to draw their fiery swords and keep the enemy away for this place. Lord, keep us safe and secure in your love and care.

Lord, we are sinners. We acknowledge our failures before you. We truly repent of how we have fallen short of your righteousness. We confess our weakness and lack of resolve in living the Christian life. We truly appreciate how time and again you have forgiven us and brought us back to yourself. We ask that you continue to deliver us from sin and evil. Strengthen us in our weakness. Keep us persevering despite obstacles. Keep us always in your tight embrace.

Lord, we are a wounded people. We have undergone experiences in life that pained us, scarred us, and kept us in bondage. We have memories of events that discourage us, weaken us, and keep us from moving forward. We may have been abused as a child. We may have been bullied in school. We may have been abandoned by parents and loved ones. We may have been rejected by peers. We may have experienced rejected or lost love. We may have been disappointed by those we look up to. We may have been betrayed. We may have been grieved by our children taking the wrong path. Lord, you know what in our past bothers and afflicts us. [(Addressing the participants) Brethren, take a few moments to present your own pain to God (pause for 7 seconds).] Lord, we ask for your healing hand upon our hearts and minds and souls. Remove the poison that lingers. Make us whole in spirit. Thank you, Lord, for the inner healing that only you can bring.

Now we come to you, Lord, for your most important promise. You said that we only need to ask and we will receive, knock and the door will be opened, that you would give your Holy Spirit to those who ask. We are before you now as a people who are asking. Lord, we need your Spirit in our lives. We need your Spirit in order to attain the victory that you have already won for us. We need your Spirit so that we might truly know you and live your way of life. Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and enkindle in us the fire of your love.

[(Addressing the participants) Brethren, in your hearts, in silence, ask the Lord to give you the Holy Spirit, as we continue to pray for you.] Lord, we ask that you pour out your Holy Spirit upon your people here. You promised, they have asked, and so we pray for a renewed outpouring of your Spirit in their lives. Just as on Pentecost, fill them and empower them with your Spirit. Pour your Spirit upon them. Baptize them with your Holy Spirit.

[(Addressing the participants) We will now sing “Spirit of the Living God.” Continue to ask God for a renewed infilling of His Spirit.] (Sing “Spirit of the Living God.” At the end of the song, the guitarist continues to strum, while the service team members praise God aloud, leading to singing in tongues. During the praising and singing in tongues, encourage the participants to do so as well.)

Thank you, Lord, for the outpouring of your Spirit upon your people. Thank you, Lord, for your great blessing. Thank you, Lord, for your faithfulness upon us all.

Lord, now that we have received your Holy Spirit in a new way, we look to living a more vibrant Christian life. We desire to love you and serve you more. We know you are there to help us, by your abundant grace, and also through gifts you give us. Help us in our weakness. [(Addressing the participants) Brethren, you know what you need or what you desire. Ask God for these. (Pause for 7 seconds)]. Thank you, Lord, for hearing the prayers of your people. Bless them with everything they need to live for you.

Lord, please continue to grant your people the grace to be strong Christians, committed to your way of life and to the service of your Kingdom. Keep them always in your loving embrace. Fill their hearts always with your peace and joy.

All these we ask and pray, in the mighty name of Jesus our Lord, Amen.

(Note: The prayer for baptism in the Spirit is done with the participants seated and the service team members surrounding them, with their hand(s) raised toward them. The participants are prayed over *en masse*. The team members pray silently in their hearts with the one doing the verbal praying over. The one praying over can use the above, prayerfully reading it, or he can pray spontaneously, but basically incorporating the different elements.)

* * *

L 11 - COVENANT

Trusting in the Lord's help and guidance:

1. I shall live as a follower of Christ.
 - * Pray and read the Bible daily.
 - * Strive for holiness and Christian perfection.
2. I shall be a committed and active member of my parish community.
 - * Love and serve my parish.
 - * Relate in love, loyalty and respect with all parishioners.
 - * Actively participate in parish events.
 - * Support the parish with my time and finances.
3. I shall be a witness to the world of God's love.
 - * Build a strong family for Christ.
 - * Actively evangelize.
 - * Live out and defend the culture of life.
 - * Love and care for the poor.

May the Lord Jesus Christ, with the intercession of our blessed Mother Mary, help me to faithfully live this covenant, for His greater honor and glory and for the good of my brothers and sisters. Amen.

Note

The importance of having a covenant is as follows:

- (1) The LCS is just the first step in living Christ and sharing Christ. It is embarking on a path that is for life. As such, the covenant reminds LCS graduates of what God has started in their lives, and the need for a continuing response on their part.
- (2) Having a covenant reminds us of the seriousness of God's call, and the new covenant we live in Christ.
- (3) We as Church are journeying as a people, and the covenant gives us a common framework for our journey.
- (4) Having a covenant provides us with a tool by which we call on each other to live the Christian life as we have committed to do. It helps us become our brother's keeper, and ensures that no one is left behind.

* * *

L 12 - LCSC Report on LCS

Name of parish _____

Location of parish _____

Parish priest _____ Diocese _____

Date(s) of LCS _____ Batch # _____

Graduates:

Total number of persons _____

Number by sex: Men _____ Women _____

Number by age ranges: 20 - 30 _____

31 - 40 _____

41 - 50 _____

51 - 60 _____

Over 60 _____

Number by education: Up to elementary only _____

Up to high school only _____

College _____

LCS team leader _____

Assisted by _____

Significant Highlights:

Report submitted by _____

Date submitted _____

Reminder: Please also submit the names and email addresses of all the LCS graduates who have email addresses to the LCSC Moderator.

L 13 - AFTER THE LCS

What happens after the LCS?

The LCS is just the first part of a long journey in our life in Christ. The LCS establishes the fundamentals and points the way. Now there needs to be continuing growth.

After the LCS, those who finish and make the LCSC covenant become part of the LCSC movement. As such they will be provided with continuing formation, and they will be taught how to become evangelizers themselves.

There will be a monthly prayer assembly in the parish, so that all LCS graduates can continue to walk and grow together in Christ. The prayer assembly will have three basic components, already experienced through the LCS. There will be worship, then teaching and/or discussion and/or personal testimonies, and then fellowship.

LCSC members are also encouraged to become involved in parish life and service, according to their particular inclinations and gifts. They can join parish groups, movements, ministries, etc., where they can get further nourishment and formation.

What else will LCSC offer the parish and its parishioners?

LCSC as a movement is focused on basic and grassroots evangelization. It is not intended to replace or “compete” with existing parish groups or ministries. After the LCSC LCS, graduates can partake of the wonderful variety of parish offerings, as their needs dictate.

However, depending on the maturity and variety of offerings of the parish, LCSC stands ready to provide further formation as needed. LCSC offers marriage retreats, youth camps, Bible studies, migrants program, chastity formation for youth, pro-life modules, templates on building integrated communities among the poor, financial stewardship program, various formation modules, cell groups, etc.

* * *

L 14 - HOW TO START AND GROW LCSC

L 14A - HOW TO START AND GROW LCSC IN A PARISH

- (1) Present LCSC to the parish priest. Get his commitment to embrace LCSC as an official parish movement.
- (2) If necessary, present LCSC to the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) and get these parish leaders on board.
- (3) Mount the LCS over a week-end. This is for PPC members and other parish leaders. They should be invited personally by the parish priest and strongly encouraged to attend.
- (4) The follow-through after the LCS is a monthly prayer assembly. This is a time of (a) worship, (b) teaching and/or Bible study, with or without discussion groups, and (c) fellowship, with or without refreshments.
- (5) Continue mounting week-end LCSs, systematically inviting parish leaders and workers. Have Batch Coordinators whose task it is to inform, encourage and gather LCS graduates for continuing LCSC activities.
- (6) When there is an adequate number of LCS graduates in a particular chapel (the community subdivision of the parish), mount a three-week LCS (one module per half-day per week) for parishioners within that chapel. The chapel-based LCSC will be led by a Chapel Coordinator.
- (7) The follow-through after the chapel LCS is also a monthly prayer assembly. Thus those parishioners who belong to a chapel will have 2 prayer assemblies during a month -- one in their chapel and another for all LCSC graduates.
- (8) As more parishioners join chapel LCSs, the chapel-based LCSC can mount the regular 9-week LCS, with one session per week. This does not preclude week-end or three-week LCSs if preferred or appropriate.
- (9) Offer formation programs as needed or desired. These can be marriage retreats for couples, youth camps for youth, migrants program, etc. Offer also the 4 LCSC pillars: Live Pure (youth chastity), Live the Word (Liturgical Bible Study), Live Life (pro-life advocacy), and Live Full (work with the poor).

L 14B - HOW TO START AND GROW LCSC IN A VICARIATE/DEANERY

- (1) Once a parish LCSC is ongoing and fairly well established, offer the LCSC to the vicariate, with the help of the parish priest in whose parish LCSC is already established. Meet with the vicar general and the parish priests of the vicariate and explain LCSC.
- (2) For all those parishes that decide to participate, mount a week-end LCS for parish leaders whom the parish priests will send. After the LCS, have the monthly prayer assembly. Continue with these regular week-end LCSs for parish leaders of the vicariate.
- (3) At a certain point, a particular parish that feels confident in mounting its own parish-based LCS should do so. Then #s (5) to (9) above follow.

L 14C - HOW TO START AND GROW LCSC IN A DIOCESE

- (1) Once a vicariate has experienced LCSC through its various parishes, offer the LCSC to the bishop, with the recommendation of the various parish priests already involved. Meet with

the bishop to explain LCSC. With the bishop's approval, it would be good to also explain LCSC to all the parish priests of the diocese, at one of their monthly gatherings with the bishop.

- (2) When the bishop decides to adopt LCSC as a diocesan movement, mount a week-end LCS for leaders of the various parishes, with participants nominated by their parish priests. This can be a large LCS with hundreds of participants. After the LCS, have the monthly prayer assembly, considering practicality of attendance by LCS graduates from far-flung areas. Continue with these week-end LCSs for parish leaders of the diocese.
- (3) At a certain point, a particular vicariate or parish that feels confident in mounting its own vicariate-based or parish-based LCS should do so. Then #s (5) to (9) above follow.

NOTE: All the above is an approach that is from the bottom up. There is nothing to prevent LCSC from starting immediately with a vicariate/deanery or with a diocese, as this just necessitates the acceptance and approval of the vicar general or the bishop.

L 14D - SUSTAINING LCSC

LCSC is grassroots, parish-based re-evangelization. Its basic purpose is to bring Catholics into an active life in the parish, by bringing them into a personal relationship with Jesus, through the LCS and continuing formation. LCSC will not replace any parish program, activity, group, ministry, etc.

To sustain LCSC's rapid and massive work of re-evangelization, resource persons will be trained. These resource persons are LCS speakers, LCS facilitators, LCS service teams, music ministries, prayer assembly leaders, Batch Coordinators, Chapel Coordinators, Parish Coordinators, Vicariate/Deanery Coordinators and Diocesan Coordinators.

* * *

L 15 - THE LIVE CHRIST, SHARE CHRIST LOGO



There are 4 basic elements in the LCSC logo -- the cross, the dove, the host and the star.

The Cross

Our task is to proclaim Christ and the salvation he won on the cross. This is the LCSC basic mission of evangelization. Our desire is for all Catholics to know Christ, to live Christ and to share Christ.

Christ and his cross are at the very center of our lives and our mission. We live for Christ and we die for Christ (Phil 1:21).

The color is red, signifying the precious blood shed by Jesus on the cross, and also the call to us to lay down our very lives for the cause of Christ. It is a call to self-sacrificial love and martyrdom.

The Dove

The dove represents the Holy Spirit. We are a people who live a life in the Spirit, and who are empowered for mission by the Spirit (Acts 1:8).

The color is gold. Through the fire of the Holy Spirit, we are purified (Sir 2:5). We are to be sacrificial offerings to God (Wis 3:6). We look forward to wearing crowns of gold in heaven (Rev 4:4).

The Host

The host represents the Eucharist, which is central to our Roman Catholic faith. LCSC is about mainstreaming Catholic lay evangelization.

The white color points to the purity of our lives. We are called to a life of holiness (1 Pet 1:15-16). In fact, we are to be perfect just as the heavenly Father is perfect (Mt 5:48).

The Star

The star represents Mary, who is the Star of Evangelization. She is crucial to our work of evangelization and mission, being there through salvation history, from Genesis (Gen 3:15) to Revelation (Rev 12:1-7).

The star is also a stylized figure of a person leaping and dancing with joy, with Christ in his/her heart and anointed by the Holy Spirit. We reflect the joy of Mary in our life and our mission (Lk 1:47-49).

The blue color signifies our consecration as a people to Mary.

L 16 - EVANGELISTIC SPIRITUALITY

The Life in Christ Seminar (LCS) fosters a spirituality that is charismatic (as in Charismatic Renewal). The basic reason is that the spirituality for evangelization and mission is charismatic spirituality.

While there are many different spiritualities in the Church (for example, contemplative, various religious orders), and all are valid and important, charismatic spirituality is intended by God for the work of massive evangelization.

How is this so?

First, charismatic spirituality is the spirituality of empowerment by the Spirit for worldwide mission.

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, after having commissioned his disciples to preach the good news to all the nations, he told them to wait for the promise of the Father, by which they would be “clothed with power from on high.” (Lk 24:49). Jesus told them that they would “be baptized with the holy Spirit.” (Acts 1:5). Jesus further said, “But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8). This baptism in the Holy Spirit is empowerment for worldwide mission.

As Catholics we of course have received the Holy Spirit in the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation. In charismatic renewal, people are prayed with for the so-called baptism in the Spirit, in order that there be a renewed infilling or outpouring of the Holy Spirit in their lives, and so that they would become witnesses to bring the good news of salvation in Jesus to many others.

Second, charismatic spirituality is the spirituality of Pentecost, when the Church was born.

Jesus had told them to wait, and the disciples did as they were told. They waited in Jerusalem, praying in the upper room. Then, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon them. The manifestation of this infilling by the Holy Spirit was that the disciples “began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim.” (Acts 2:4). They praised God and proclaimed “the mighty acts of God” in a loud voice. Some people thought they were drunk (Acts 2:15).

Peter was emboldened and empowered to preach one sermon where 3,000 persons were converted. He explained that what was happening was the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel. God pours out a portion of His spirit upon all flesh, and people prophesy, see visions and dream dreams (Acts 2:17). Then God will work wonders and signs (Acts 2:19), so that those who call upon the name of the Lord will be saved, before the second coming of Jesus (Acts 2:20-21).

Third, charismatic spirituality is the spirituality of the early Church.

The early Church was a charismatic Church. The baptism in the Spirit was an integral part of mission. Peter and John prayed for Jews in Samaria to receive the Holy Spirit; “they laid hands on them and they received the holy Spirit.” (Acts 8:17). Through Peter, the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on Gentiles, and they spoke in tongues and glorified God (Acts 10:45-46). Paul went to Ephesus and baptized some disciples in the name of Jesus. “And when Paul laid his hands on them, the holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.” (Acts 19:6).

As the Church grew and became institutionalized, the charismatic dimension was diminished, and even lost. God sought to bring back this essential dimension of Church life and mission, and so the Catholic Charismatic Renewal started in the mid-1970s.

Fourth, charismatic spirituality is the spirituality of our ancestors-in-faith, the Israelites.

God intended Israel to be His light to a pagan world. The people whom God formed as a people, whom He entered into covenant with, whom He taught about worship, were charismatic. Charismatic worship was the norm.

This is evident from their “songbook,” the Book of Psalms. They were exhorted to praise out loud, to shout, play musical instruments (loud ones like horns and cymbals), to lift their hands, to dance.

Even King David, out of joy at the return of the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, led the people in procession amid great festivities. David stripped down to a linen apron and danced with abandon, while all Israel gave out shouts of joy and to the sound of the horn (2 Sm 6:14-15).

Christians today are the new Israel. We inherit the promises of God to His chosen people. But what God intended for Israel, in raising them to be His light to the world, is also for us Christians today. This includes our spirituality. We would do well to live out such a spirituality. Even if those close to us become ashamed of us (2 Sm 6:20). Even if people think that we are drunk (Acts 2:15).

Fifth, charismatic spirituality is the spirituality that more readily brings people, especially nominal Christians, to personal conversion and transformation in Christ.

It touches not just the minds but especially the hearts of people. When Peter preached his sermon on Pentecost, those who heard “were cut to the heart” and were led to repentance (Acts 2:37-38).

From repentance, people continue on their journey, looking to the holiness to which they are called. This is how they become effective witnesses to the faith.

Sixth, charismatic spirituality is the spirituality that provides spiritual gifts that are essential for mission.

When the Church speaks about spiritual gifts, what is often thought of are the seven gifts in Isaiah: wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, piety, fear of the Lord (Is 11:2-3a). These are sanctifying gifts, essential for us to grow in holiness. On the other hand, there are charismatic gifts, intended for service. The main list of such gifts is in 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 (there are other gifts in other passages). Sanctifying gifts are for the internal dimension of our individual Christian life, while charismatic gifts are for the external dimension of service, including building up the body.

Many of these gifts are no longer appreciated or even known. But they are crucial to evangelization and mission. For example, faith refers to the faith that moves mountains (or demolishes strongholds). Miraculous healings and mighty deeds are manifestations of the power of the Spirit. Tongues is important for prayer (1 Cor 14:2) and for connecting to the spirit of God (1 Cor 14:14).

Seventh, charismatic spirituality is the spirituality that builds Christian community.

The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples resulted in Christian community, in the establishment of the Church. The disciples began to live a communal life, characterized by formation, prayers and worship, the Eucharist, sharing of resources, meetings and fellowship, effective witness, massive evangelization (Acts 2:42-47). They even solved the problem of poverty, such that there was no one in need (Acts 4:32-35).

Everyone receives a charismatic gift (1 Cor 12:7,11). These gifts are used to build community (1 Cor 12:12,27-30), to prepare the body for service to the larger society. The work of evangelization is the work of the whole Church and not just separate individuals.

Eighth, charismatic spirituality is the spirituality of worship in heaven.

We all want to get to heaven. Now according to the vision of John, worship in heaven will be charismatic. The angels and saints praise and cry out to God in a loud voice (Rev 7:10,19:1). It will be “like the sound of a great multitude or the sound of rushing water or mighty peals of thunder” (Rev 19:6).

It would be good to get used to it while we are still on earth.

One problem in the Church today is that Catholics do not really know the Holy Spirit. They know the Father, who is Creator. They know the Son, who is Savior. But they miss out on the Holy Spirit, who is Sanctifier and who empowers for mission. It may well be that most Catholics today, when asked, “Did you receive the holy Spirit when you became believers?” (Acts 19:2), would answer, “We have never even heard that there is a holy Spirit.” (Acts 19:2).

Catholics first receive the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Baptism. Baptism cleanses us of original sin and makes us children of God. It is “a baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” (Acts 19:4). Then, when we have been instructed in the faith and are mature enough to think and decide for ourselves, we receive the sacrament of Confirmation. This makes us soldiers of Christ, tasked to proclaim him to the world.

But how come many baptized and confirmed Catholics are so sinful, lethargic in their faith, not aware at all of the call to evangelize? This is where a renewed infilling or outpouring of the Holy Spirit is needed. This is accomplished through the so-called baptism in the Holy Spirit and entrance into the charismatic dimension of faith.

The Catholic Church is in essence a missionary Church. But how can she accomplish her mission without the active work of the Holy Spirit?

Do all Catholics have to be charismatics, or be part of charismatic renewal? No. But if the Catholic Church is to live up to its essence as a missionary Church, then charismatic spirituality is very helpful. We might even say crucial.

L 17 - FR. CANTALAMESSA ON CHARISMATIC SPIRITUALITY

Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, the preacher to the papal household, said the following about Charismatic Renewal in his third Advent sermon on December 2011.

“In one of his documents, John Paul II said that the proliferation of sects forced us to ask why, to ask what is lacking in our pastoral methods. My own conviction, based on experience -- and not only in Latin American countries -- is as follows. What is attractive outside the Church are not certain alternative forms of popular piety, which the majority of other churches and sects reject and fight against. It is a proclamation, partial perhaps, but powerful, of the grace of God, the possibility of experiencing Jesus as one’s personal Lord and Saviour, belonging to a group of people who personally take care of your needs, who pray over you when medicine has nothing more to say.

If on the one hand we can rejoice that these people have found Christ and have been converted, it is sad that in order to do so they felt they had to leave their Church. In the majority of churches where these brothers and sisters end up, everything revolves around first conversion and the acceptance of Jesus as Lord. In the Catholic Church, thanks to the sacraments, the magisterium, and the wealth of spirituality, there is the advantage of not stopping at that initial stage, but one can reach the fullness and perfection of the Christian life. The saints are proof of this. But it is necessary to take that conscious and personal initial step, and this is precisely where we are challenged and stimulated by the evangelical and Pentecostal communities.

In this respect, the Charismatic Renewal has proved to be, in the words of Paul VI, “a chance for the Church.” In Latin America, the pastors of the Church are realizing that the Charismatic Renewal is not (as some believed at the beginning) “part of the problem” of the exodus of Catholics from the Church, but is rather part of the solution to the problem. Statistics will never show how many people have remained faithful to the Church because of it, because they found within its ranks what others were looking for elsewhere. The numerous communities that have sprung up from within the Charismatic Movement, albeit with the limitations and at times the drifting that one finds in any human venture, are at the front line of service to the Church and of evangelization.”

* * *

L 18 - BOOK RESOURCES

Personal spirituality

Amazing Truths that will Change your Life
 Focused on Christ
 Following Christ
 Worship

New Evangelization

BE.LI.EV.E!
 Fishers of Men
 Forty Days of Wonder-Working Faith
 Renewing the Face of the Earth
 The New Evangelization -- A Work of the Divine Family

Family Life

Families in the Holy Spirit

Pro-Life

Forty Days of Life

Building the Church of the Poor

Bringing Glad Tidings to the Poor
 Forty Days with the Poor
 Freeing the Captives

On Leadership

Servant Leadership

On Mary

Forty Days with Mary
 Forty More Days with Mary
 Mary in the Work of Evangelization and Family Renewal

(FAP 7/15/13)